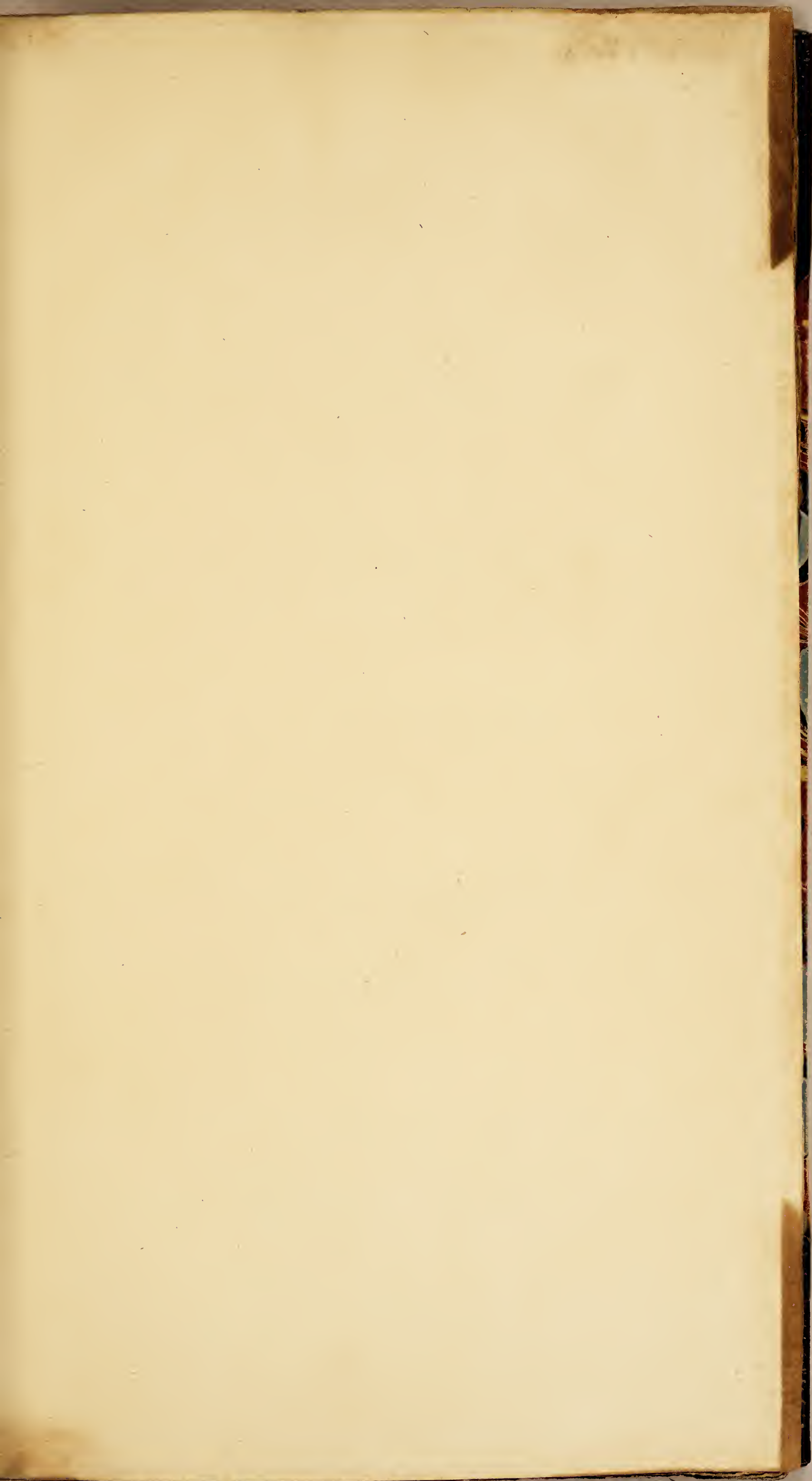


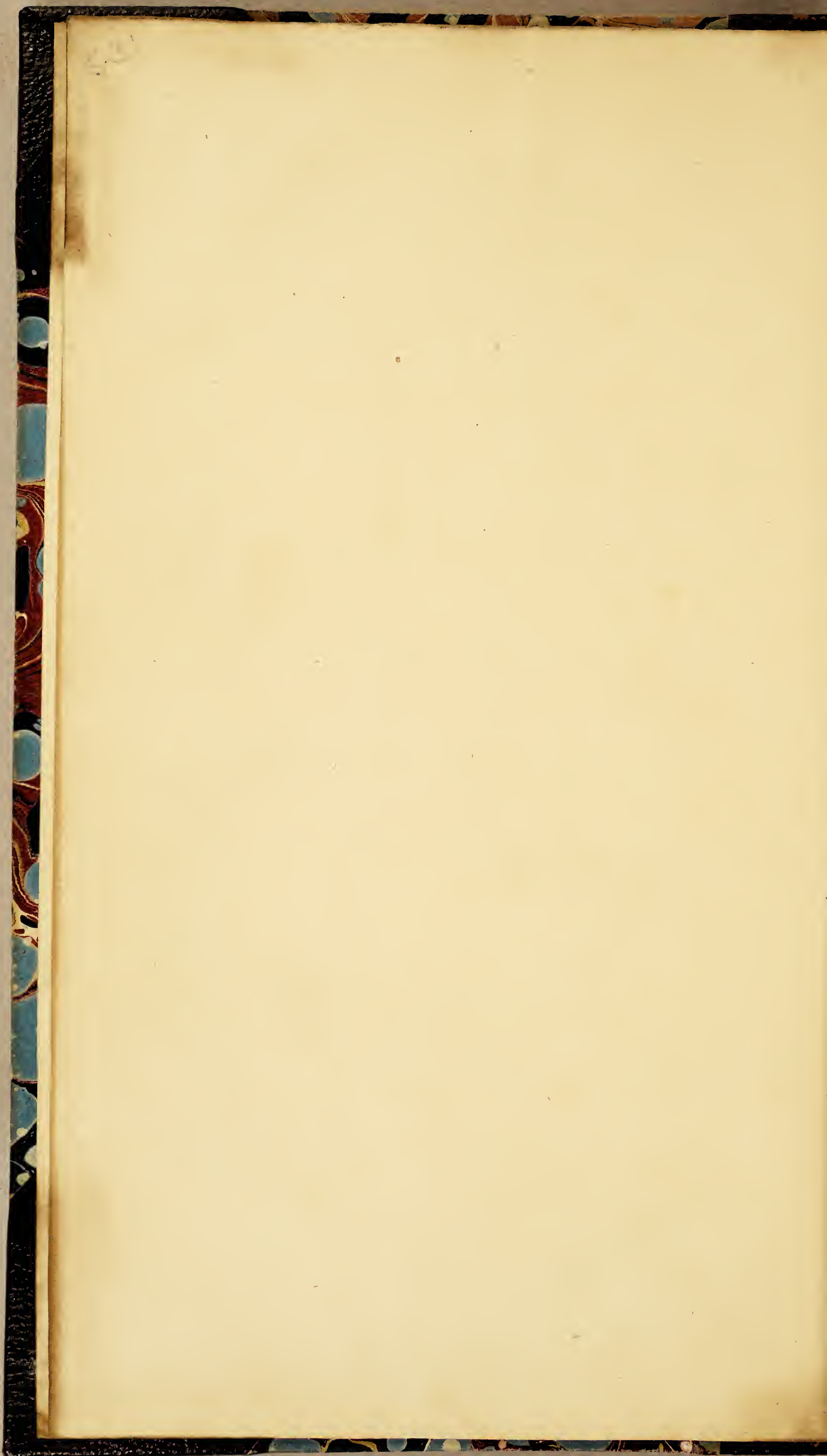


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DISSERTATION

CONCERNING

LIBERTY AND NECESSITY;

CONTAINING

R E M A R K S

ON THE

ESSAYS OF DR. SAMUEL WEST,

AND ON THE

WRITINGS OF SEVERAL OTHER AUTHORS,  
ON THOSE SUBJECTS.

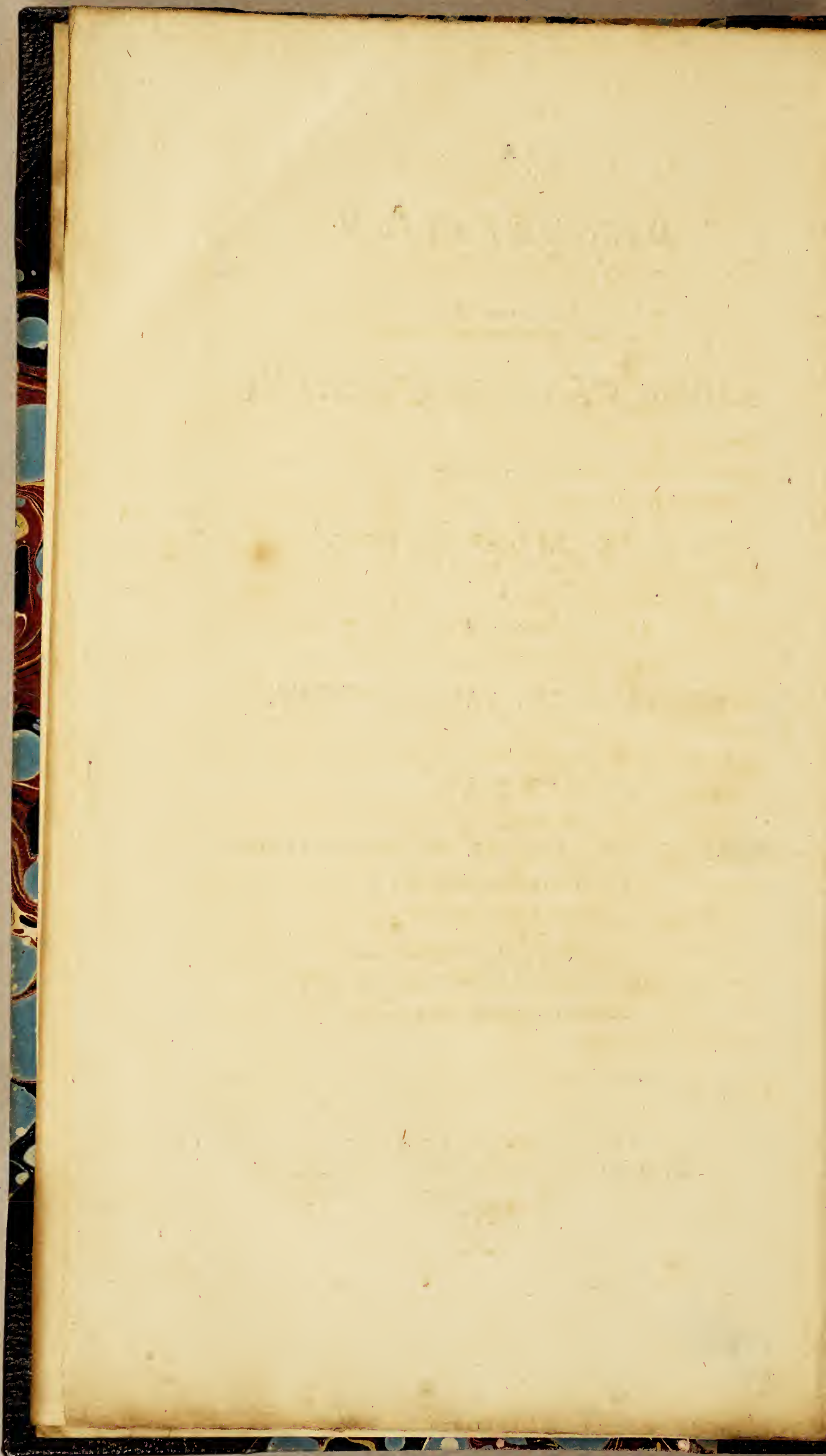
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By JONATHAN EDWARDS, D. D.  
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PRINTED AT WORCESTER, (L. W. P.)  
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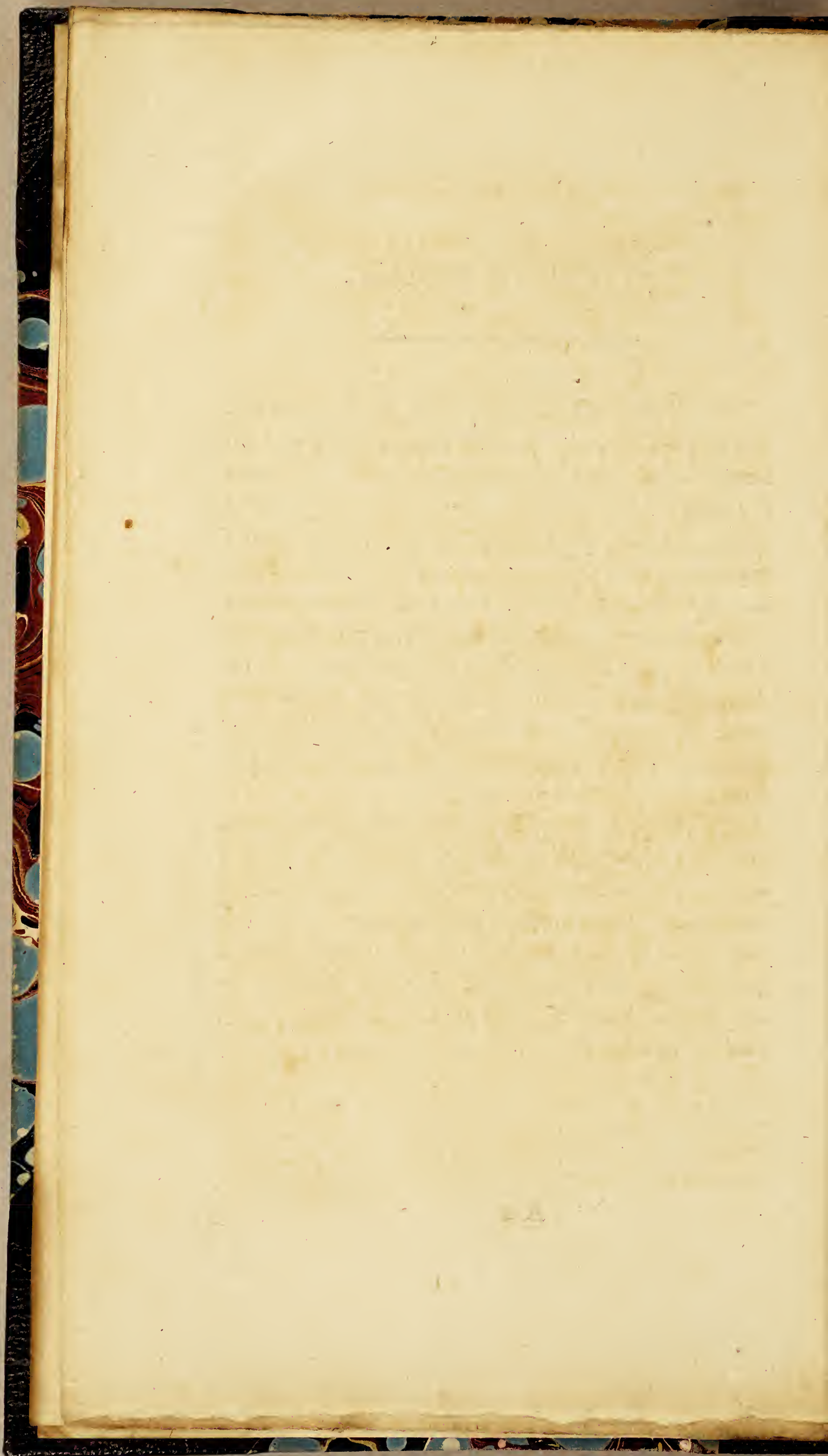
## ADVERTISEMENT.

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*I BEGAN* this Dissertation before I saw Dr. West's second edition of his First Part published with his Second Part: But on hearing, that he was about to publish his sentiments on Liberty and Necessity more largely, I suspended the prosecution of my design, that I might see what he should further publish. Since the publication of the second part, I have been necessarily though reluctantly kept back till this time, from finishing what I had begun. At length I send it forth, requesting the candour of all who shall read it. If ever candour to a writer be reasonably requested, it is so, on the deep and difficult subjects brought under consideration in this Dissertation.

The quotations from the Doctor's first part, are made according to the pages of the first edition, with which I began. Yet wherever any variation in words, between the first and second editions, has been noticed; the second edition has been followed in that respect. When I quote the first part the page or pages only are referred to. When I quote the second part, I specify the part as well as the pages.









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## DISSERTATION, &c.

### CHAPTER I.

*Of Natural and Moral Necessity and Inability.*



RESIDENT Edwards, in his book on *the Freedom of Will*, distinguishes between *natural* and *moral* necessity and inability. By *moral* necessity he tells us, he means, "That necessity of connection and consequence, which arises from such moral causes, as the strength of inclination or motives, and the connection which there is in many cases between these and certain volitions and actions." P. 21. By *natural* necessity he explains himself to mean, "Such necessity as men are under, through the force of *natural* causes, as distinguished from what are called *moral* causes; such as habits and dispositions of heart, and moral motives and inducements." Ibid. He further holds, that "the difference between these two kinds of necessity, does not lie so much in the *nature* of the connection, as in the *two terms* connected;" that in moral necessity, "the cause ——— is of a *moral* nature, either some *previous habitual* dis-



“ *position*, or some *motive* exhibited to the understand-  
 “ ing: And the effect is also ——— of a moral nature  
 “ ——— some *inclination* or *volition* of the soul or *vol-*  
 “ *untary action*.” P. 22. Also he held, that natural  
 necessity always “ has reference to some supposable  
 “ voluntary opposition or endeavour, which is insuffi-  
 “ cient. But no such opposition or contrary will and  
 “ endeavour is supposable in the case of moral necessi-  
 “ ty, which is a *certainty of the inclination and will it-*  
 “ *self*, which does not admit of the supposition of a  
 “ will to oppose and resist it. For it is absurd to sup-  
 “ pose the same individual will to oppose itself *in its*  
 “ *present act*.” P. 23, 24. And p. 16. “ Philosophical  
 “ *necessity* is really nothing else than the full and fixed  
 “ connection between the things signified by the sub-  
 “ ject and predicate of a proposition. When there is  
 “ such a connection, then the thing affirmed in the  
 “ proposition is necessary——In this sense I use  
 “ the word *necessity*——when I endeavor to prove,  
 “ that *necessity is not inconsistent with liberty*.” Ibid.  
 “ Philosophical necessity is nothing different from the  
 “ certainty that is in things themselves, which is the  
 “ foundation of the certainty of the knowledge of  
 “ them.”

This is the account given by President Edwards,  
 of the distinction, which he made between natural  
 and moral necessity. Moral necessity is the certain or  
 necessary connection between moral causes and moral  
 effects; natural necessity is the connection between  
 causes and effects, which are not of a moral nature.  
 The difference between these two kinds of necessity  
 lies chiefly in the nature of *the two terms* connected  
 by it. Natural necessity admits of voluntary, but in-  
 effectual opposition from him who is subject to the ne-  
 cessity; the immediate effect, produced by that ne-  
 cessity, may be opposed by the will of the subject.  
 But with respect to moral necessity, which is a pre-  
 vious certainty of the existence of a volition or volun-  
 tary action, it is absurd to suppose, that *in that act* the  
 will



will should either oppose itself, or the necessity from which the act arises.—The distinction between natural and moral inability is analogous to this. Inability is the reverse of necessity.

Now Dr. West tells us, that this “is a distinction without a difference,” p. 8. But if the terms connected in these cases be different, as President Edwards supposes; if in one case “the cause, with which the effect is connected, be some previous habitual disposition, or some motive exhibited to the understanding; and the effect be a volition or voluntary action;” in the other, the cause be neither an habitual disposition nor a motive exhibited to the understanding, and the effect be neither a volition nor a voluntary action; it is manifest, that there is that very difference in the two cases, which President Edwards’s distinction supposes. To say, that this is a distinction without a difference, is to say, that an habitual disposition\* or a motive, is the same with something, which is not an habitual disposition or motive; and that a volition or voluntary action, is the same with what is not a volition or voluntary action.

But Dr. West endeavours to support his charge of a distinction without a difference. Let us attend to what he offers with this view: It is this, “That,” according to President Edwards, “the principal, if not the only difference between natural——and moral necessity and inability, is, that in the former case, the opposition and endeavour against what does take place, is overcome and borne down by a superiour force; but in the latter kind of necessity and inability there is no opposition and endeavour, that is overcome by any superiour force. But that Mr. Edwards’s moral necessity and inability are attended with as much insufficient opposition and endeavour, as his natural necessity”

A 4

“sity

\* Gentlemen may differ in their explanations of that habitual disposition or bias, which is the cause or antecedent of volition or voluntary action; some supposing it to be a certain cast or mould of the substance of the soul; others supposing it to consist in a divine constitution, that volitions of a certain kind, shall, in a regular manner and on certain conditions, succeed each other in the mind. But it does not appear, that President Edwards meant to decide this question.



“fity and inability ;” p. 8. Whether this, which is here said to be, be indeed according to President Edwards the only or the principal difference between natural and moral necessity and inability, I shall not at present stand to dispute. It is sufficient for my present purpose to show, that President Edwards’s moral necessity and inability are not, and cannot be attended with as much insufficient opposition and endeavour, as his natural necessity and inability.

Natural necessity may compel a man to that, to which his whole will is entirely opposed, and against which he puts forth all the opposition, of which his strength of body and mind admits : As when he is thrown from a precipice or is dragged to prison. But a man’s whole will is never opposed to the influence of that bias, disposition or motive, or of any moral necessity, with which he complies. Whenever any of these influences a man to put forth a volition or a voluntary external action, it prevails on his will ; his will therefore consents, though it may be with some degree of reluctance occasioned by the other bias or motive. Nothing is more common than such opposition between reason or conscience, and depraved appetite ; between covetousness and ambition ; indolence and a wish for gain, &c. But whenever any of these principles becomes stronger than its opposite, the will consents, and the man acts voluntarily under the influence of moral necessity ; and though he may act with some degree of reluctance from the opposite principle, yet no man will say, that he is compelled to act against his *whole* will, or even against his strongest inclination ; for by the very case supposed, he acts agreeably to his strongest inclination.\* But by natural necessity he is or may be compelled to that, to which every inclination and act of his will, the strongest as well as the most feeble, is most directly opposed. A man dragged to prison may be compelled to enter it, in direct opposition to every

\* By *inclination, disposition or bias*, I mean something distinct from volition. This distinction is made by Dr. West, p. 13.



every act of his will. This is natural necessity. But an indolent man, who is influenced to labour by the prospect of gain, is not compelled to labour in opposition to every inclination or act of his will, but complies with the stronger inclination and act, in opposition to the weaker, which would lead him to indulge himself in ease. This is an instance of moral necessity. ——— One difference between natural necessity and moral, is, that every inclination and act of the will does or may directly oppose natural necessity; but every act of will always coincides with that moral necessity, from which it arises, and when there is a struggle between different inclinations or propensities and their acts, the acts of that which prevails, never oppose the moral necessity by which they take place.

When President Edwards says, that no voluntary insufficient opposition or endeavour is supposable in the case of moral necessity; his evident meaning is, that it is not supposable, that an act of the will should be opposed to that moral necessity, by which it takes place. For instance, if a man be under a moral necessity of choosing a virtuous course of life, this choice is not opposed to the necessity, which is the source of it, nor is it supposable, that it should be opposed to it or at all resist it. The case is very different with regard to natural necessity. A man dragged to execution may in every respect oppose with his will, that necessity, by which he is carried on.

But though a man, who is determined by moral necessity to choose a virtuous course, cannot *in that act* oppose that choice or the cause of it; yet he may *in other acts* of his will oppose both this choice and the cause, and thus in different acts choose and act inconsistently. He may from prevailing motives and from moral necessity, choose virtue. He may at the same time from weaker motives and ineffectual temptations, choose vice, and so far feel reluctant or indisposed to virtue. And this weaker choice is no more opposed to the moral necessity, which causes it, than the stronger choice



choice of virtue is to the moral necessity which causes that. In both there is no supposable opposition to their respective necessities, which are their causes. This is true with respect to every choice whether stronger or weaker, whether prevailing to govern the heart and conduct, or not. Yet there is a mutual opposition between the forementioned different acts of choice, the choice of virtue and choice of vice. Indeed these two opposite choices cannot both prevail, so as to govern the heart and life at the same time. They may in particular cases be equal, or so nearly equal, that neither of them at that instant appears to prevail, and the man "is in a strait betwixt two." In other instances they may for a time at least alternately prevail, and exhibit a man of very inconsistent conduct. In other instances one may generally prevail, and denominate the subject a virtuous or vicious man, accordingly as the choice and love of virtue, or of vice, prevails and governs him. Thus we shall have all those four modes of insufficient opposition to moral necessity, which Dr. West says, p. 10, President Edwards allows may take place, and from which he argues that President Edwards's moral necessity may be attended with as much insufficient opposition, as his natural necessity; and that therefore President Edwards's distinction between natural and moral necessity is without a difference. 1. The weaker motives to vice may oppose the stronger motives to virtue. 2. The man may *now* have strong and prevailing acts, desires and resolutions against those acts of vice, to which he foresees he shall in certain circumstances be exposed, and which he actually indulges, when the foreseen circumstances take place. 3. The will may remotely and indirectly resist itself, not in the same acts, but in different acts; the depraved appetites may struggle against the principles of virtue. 4. Reason pleading in favour of virtue, may resist the present acts, which incline, and perhaps prevailingly, to vice. Nor is there any thing in all this, but what was long since observed by the poet, and has  
always



always been noticed by all attentive observers of human nature :

*“Video meliora, proboque ; deteriora sequor.”*

Now, it will not be pretended, that this opposition of one act of the will, to another, is parallel to the entire opposition of the will which there is or may be, to natural necessity ; *e. g.* to falling when a man is thrown down a precipice, or to going to the gallows, when a man is forced thither. In the latter case, there is or may be an entire and perfect opposition of the whole will, to the necessity. In the former, there is a consent of the will to the necessity, though there may be a degree of opposite choice arising from some other motive, bias, cause or necessity.

Dr. West infers from this actual or possible opposition of the acts of one propensity in human nature, to those of another, acknowledged by President Edwards, that all those acts which admit of this opposition are necessary with natural necessity. If this inference be just, doubtless every act of the human will is necessary with natural necessity. If a man choose virtue, he doubtless does or may from temptation feel some inclination to vice. In this case then his choice of virtue is, according to the reasoning of Dr. West, the effect of natural necessity ; for natural necessity is, according to that reasoning, that which admits of any voluntary opposition. And as there is no propensity in human nature, which may not be opposed by some other propensity ; and as the human mind is not capable of any act, which may not be attended with some degree of reluctance at least ; therefore human nature is not capable of any act, which is not necessitated with a natural necessity, a necessity, which is equally inconsistent with praise and blame, as that by which a man falls, when he is thrown from an eminence.

This opposition of one propensity in human nature to another, and of one act of the will to another, is abundantly granted by Dr. West : So that if this prove or imply a natural necessity, he holds that the acts of the will are subject to natural necessity. P. 14. “ A

“ man



“ man may *love* a person, whom he knows to be utterly  
 “ unworthy of his affections, and may really *choose* to  
 “ eradicate this propension from his mind ; and yet he  
 “ may find this passion rising in his breast, in direct op-  
 “ position to his *will* or *choice*. And the same observa-  
 “ tions may be made with respect to every other pro-  
 “ pension in the human mind. *They may all be in di-*  
 “ *rect opposition to present acts of the will and choice.*  
 “ Were not this the case, there could be no struggle in  
 “ the mind, to overcome wrong propensions and vicious  
 “ habits. But common experience will teach us, that  
 “ there is frequently a very great struggle in the mind,  
 “ to gain the victory over vile affections.” Whatever  
 distinction Dr. West makes between propension and  
 volition, he will doubtless grant, that there may be acts  
 of the will agreeable to a propension, as well as in op-  
 position to it ; that there may be volitions and actions  
 agreeable to a vicious propension, and yet there may be  
 a struggle of virtuous propension and volition in op-  
 position to the vicious. On the other hand, there may  
 be a struggle of vicious propension and volition in op-  
 position to the virtuous. Dr. West will not deny that  
 love to God, to his law and to virtue, is a voluntary  
 exercise. Now he who has a degree of voluntary  
 love to God and true virtue, and a degree of volun-  
 tary love to vice, has an opposition not only of pro-  
 pensions, but of voluntary acts and exercises, *i. e.* of  
 volitions. Yet would Dr. West allow, that this love  
 of virtue, which is opposed by a degree of love to vice,  
 is necessitated by a natural necessity ? This will follow  
 from the principle of his argument to prove, that Presi-  
 dent Edwards’s moral necessity is really a natural necessity.

Dr. West, p. 14, asserts, “ that it is absurd, that the  
 “ will should directly oppose its own present acts ;”  
 and yet in p. 9, he says, “ there may be will and en-  
 “ deavour against, or diverse from *present acts of the*  
 “ *will.*” These propositions seem incapable of recon-  
 ciliation, unless on the ground of the distinction,  
 which I have made between the will opposing itself  
 in



in the same acts, and in different acts arising from different motives or propensities.

President Edwards constantly holds, that natural necessity and inability are inconsistent with blame in any instance. The reason of this is, that all our sincere and most ardent desires and acts of will, as well as external endeavours, may be resisted, opposed and overcome as to their effects. But this is not the case in moral necessity and inability; therefore they do not excuse from blame. When under a moral necessity we will to do an action, our strongest desires and acts of will coincide with the moral necessity, and we voluntarily act agreeably to it. And if we have weaker wishes and desires opposing the necessity and the stronger desires and acts of our will, which follow from that necessity, we are not to be excused from blame on that account, because on the whole we consent to do the action. No man will pretend, that he who is influenced by the malice of his own heart, to murder his neighbour, is excusable in that action, because he has some weak and ineffectual reluctance arising from a knowledge of the divine law and from the dictates of his own conscience.

It has been said by some of our opponents in this disquisition, that they cannot find out what we mean by moral necessity, as distinguished from natural or physical. If it be not sufficiently plain from his own writings, what President Edwards meant by it, I can only give my opinion concerning his meaning. But concerning my own meaning I have a right to speak more peremptorily, that I mean all necessity or previous certainty of the volition or voluntary action of a rational being, whatever be the cause or influence, by which that necessity is established, or the volition brought into existence, and however great and efficacious that influence be. When "God's people are made willing in the day of his power," there is doubtless a necessity of their being willing. This necessity I call a moral necessity. Against this willingness, or  
the



the necessity, or the necessitating cause, from which it arises, the will of him who is made willing, does not and cannot possibly make entire and direct opposition. By the very supposition he is made willing, his will therefore coincides with the necessity and consents to it; and so far as it consents, it cannot dissent or make opposition.

Some seem to imagine, that the difference between natural and moral necessity, is, that the former is the effect of a strong and irresistible cause; but the latter of a weak one, which may be resisted and overcome; and that entire opposition of will is supposable in both cases; though with this difference, that in natural necessity it is ineffectual, but in moral it may be effectual. Whereas the truth is, that let the cause of a moral act be what it will, it involves a moral necessity only, because it is not supposable, that the will should be entirely opposed to it.

The persons abovementioned object to the application of such strong epithets as *infallible, unavoidable, unalterable, unfrustrable, &c.* to moral necessity and inability, supposing that they imply a natural necessity inconsistent with praise and blame. But when our Lord had given the prediction, was there not an infallible, unavoidable, unalterable and unfrustrable certainty, that Judas would betray his Lord? And will it be pretended, that on that account he was not to be blamed for so doing? Yet this action of Judas was rendered no more unfrustrably necessary by the prediction, than it was before, as it was before certainly foreknown. Nor was it more certainly foreknown, than every event and every moral action, which ever has or will come to pass. Therefore all moral actions are unfrustrably certain previously to their existence; and all those epithets are as properly applicable to them, as to the treachery of Judas, after it was divinely predicted.

It has been said, that till the measure of influence implied in moral necessity, is distinctly known, it is impossible



impossible to tell, when or how far a person is rewardable or punishable. But this is said, under a mistaken idea of moral necessity, viz. that moral necessity implies a low degree of influence only. Moral necessity is the real and certain connection between some moral action and its cause; and there is no moral *necessity* in the case, unless the connection be real and absolutely certain, so as to *ensure* the existence of the action. And will it be pretended, that if the measure of influence be increased beyond this, the necessity ceases to be moral and becomes natural? That if a motive or a malicious temper be barely sufficient certainly and infallibly to influence a man to murder his neighbour, the necessity is moral and the man is blamable; but if it become more than barely sufficient for this, so as to excite him to perpetrate the action with great eagerness and with the overflowing of malice, that in this case the necessity is natural and the man entirely unblamable?—The truth is, that there is no inconsistency between the most efficacious influence in moral necessity and accountableness. Let the influence be ever so great, still the man acts voluntarily, and there is no supposable entire opposition of will; and as he is a rational creature, he is accountable for his voluntary actions. The contrary supposition implies, that in order to accountableness a man must have a liberty of *contingence*, and it must be, previously to his acting, *uncertain* how he will act. A bare previous certainty of the voluntary action of an intelligent being is as inconsistent with liberty and accountableness, as any possible degree of influence producing such an action. In either case there is an equal consent of the will, and an entire opposition of the will is no more supposable in the one case, than in the other.

Some insist, that moral necessity and inability are always of our own procuring; and whatever necessity is not caused by ourselves is not moral necessity. But moral necessity is the previous certainty of a  
moral



moral action. Now as it was divinely foretold, ages before it came to pass, that the Jews would crucify our Lord, and that the man of sin would persecute the saints, &c. &c. there was a moral necessity, that those facts should come to pass: And as this necessity existed long before the perpetrators of those facts existed, they did not cause the necessity. Therefore according to this account of moral and natural necessity, it was a natural necessity, and the Jews and the man of sin were in those actions, as innocent as they were in breathing or in any involuntary motion.—Further, as all the actions of rational creatures are foreknown by God, before the authors of them come into existence, they are equally certain and necessary, as those which are predicted. But this necessity, for the reason already given, cannot be the effect of those, whose actions they are. Therefore either this is not a natural necessity, or there never was, is now nor can be any crime or sin in the universe.

Dr. Clarke in his Remarks on Collins gives a true account of moral necessity; p. 16. “By *moral necessity* consistent writers never mean any more than to express in a figurative manner, the *certainty* of such an event.” And he illustrates it by the impossibility, that the world should come to an end this year, if God have promised that it shall continue another year. Yet in his dispute with *Leibnitz* he gives a very different account of it; p. 289. “That a good being, continuing to be good, cannot do evil; or a wise being, continuing to be wise, cannot do unwisely; or a veracious person, continuing to be veracious, cannot tell a lie; is *moral necessity*.” This last account implies no other necessity, than that a thing must be when it is supposed to be; which is no more than the trifling proposition, that *what is, is*. But the certainty implied in the divine prediction, that the world will continue to a particular period, is a very different matter.—Dr. West, if I understand him, has adopted the last account given by Dr. Clarke of moral



al necessity. No doubt he and Dr. Clarke had a right to give their own definitions of moral necessity ; but Dr. West had no right to impute his idea to President Edwards, and then dispute against it as belonging to him. Dr. Clarke's last described moral necessity would exist, if human volitions came into existence by a self-determining power or by mere chance. On either of those suppositions, *what is, is, and must be, so long as it is.* But President Edwards's idea of moral necessity is utterly inconsistent with volitions' coming into existence by chance, or by self-determination, unless self-determination be previously established.

In all matters of dispute, it ought to be considered how far the parties are agreed, and wherein they differ. As to natural and moral necessity, I believe both parties are agreed, in this, that all necessity inconsistent with moral agency, or praise and blame, is natural necessity ; and that all necessity consistent with praise and blame, is moral necessity. Therefore if all necessity of the volitions of rational beings, be consistent with praise and blame ; all such necessity is moral necessity. But if any necessity of the volitions of a rational being, be inconsistent with praise and blame ; then I have given an erroneous account of moral necessity. Therefore on this let us join issue. If an instance can be produced of the volition of a rational being in such a sense necessary, as to be on that account the proper object of neither praise nor blame ; I will confess, that I am mistaken in my idea of moral necessity. But until such an instance can be produced, may I not fairly presume, that my idea is right ?—— If it should be said, that no volitions of rational creatures are in any sense necessary, or that they are not previously certain ; I recur to the instances of Judas's treachery, Peter's falsehood, Pharaoh's refusal to let Israel go, and to every other voluntary action of a rational being divinely predicted or foreknown.

If any should dispute, whether this previous certainty of voluntary actions, be properly called *necessity* ;



ty; this would be a merely *verbal* dispute, which they who choose, may agitate to their full satisfaction. It is sufficient to inform them, that it is what we mean by moral necessity.

I have already shown that Dr. West grants the mutual opposition of different propensions and volitions; it may be further observed that, though he so strenuously disputes against the distinction between natural and moral necessity, and says it is made without a difference; yet the same distinction is abundantly implied in his book, particularly in his third essay. He there holds forth, that a man may have a *physical power* to do an action, and yet *not exert* that power; that it may be *certain*, there may be a *certainty*, and it may be *certainly foreknown*, that a man will do something, which he has a *physical power* not to do; p. 46. That a bare *certainty*, that an agent will do such a thing, does not imply, that he had not a power to refrain from doing it; p. 45. Now by moral necessity we mean the previous certainty of any moral action. Therefore when Dr. West, p. 46, holds, *that there may be a CERTAINTY, that a man will do such a thing, though he may have at the same time a physical power of not doing it*; he holds, that there may be the very thing which President Edwards calls a *moral necessity*, that the man will do the thing, though he may have at the same time a *physical or natural power* not to do it.—Thus Dr. West makes and abundantly insists on that very distinction, which he reprobates in President Edwards, and which he declares to be made without any difference. Indeed it is impossible for any man to write sensibly or plausibly on this subject, without going on the ground of this distinction.

It has been inquired concerning President Edwards's moral inability, whether the man, who is the subject of it, *can remove* it? I answer, yes, he has the same physical power to remove it and to do the action, which he is morally unable to do, which the man, concerning whom Dr. West supposes there is a certainty, that he will not do an action, has to do the action  
and



and so to defeat or remove the said certainty. I agree with Dr. West, that he has a physical power so to do.

Perhaps after all some will insist, that natural and moral necessity are the same. It is ardently to be wished, that such persons would tell us, in what respects they are the same. We have informed them, in what respects we hold them to be different. We wish them to be equally explicit and candid. If they mean, that natural and moral necessity are the same in this respect, that they are or may be equally certain and fixed, and may equally ensure their respective consequences or effects; I grant it. Still they may be different in other respects, particularly this, that natural necessity respects those events or things only, which are not of a moral nature, while moral necessity respects those only, which are of a moral nature; and there may be an entire opposition of will to the former, but not to the latter. If they mean, that they are the same as to virtue and vice, praise and blame, &c. this is not granted, and to assert it, is a mere begging of the question. If they mean, that both those kinds of necessity may arise from *nature*; meaning by this the fixed properties of beings and the established course of things and events; this is granted. Still there may be the grounds of distinction before mentioned. If they say, that moral necessity is *natural* necessity, because it is or may be *born with us*; I grant it. But this is mere quibbling on the word *natural*. Though volitions may be the effects of a bias of mind born with us, yet those volitions are moral acts, and therefore the necessity from which they proceed, is a *moral* necessity. A man born with a contracted, selfish disposition, still has a physical power to be benevolent, and it is not supposable, that his will or disposition should be entirely opposed to selfishness, whenever he is the subject of it.



## CHAPTER II.

*Of Liberty.*

**D**R. West says, p. 16, "By liberty we mean a power of acting, willing or choosing; and by a power of acting, we mean, that when all circumstances necessary for action have taken place, the mind can act or not act." This is not explicit: There is an ambiguity in the words *power, can, not act*. If by *power* and *can*, he mean *natural* power, as it has been explained in the preceding chapter; I agree that in any given case we have a power to act or decline the proposed action. A man possesses liberty when he possesses a natural or physical power to do an action, and is under no natural inability with respect to that action. The word liberty suggests a negative idea, and means the absence of certain obstacles, confinement or restriction. A bird not confined in a cage, but let loose in the open air, is free; a man not shut up in prison, is in that respect, free; a servant delivered from the control of his master, is free; a man, who has disengaged himself from the tie of a civil bond, is in that respect free. In all these cases liberty implies some exemption, or some negation. In a moral sense and with respect to moral conduct, a man is free or possesses liberty, when he is under no involuntary restraint or compulsion; *i. e.* when he is under no restraint or compulsion, to which his will does not consent, or to which it is or may be entirely opposed. An exemption from this restraint or compulsion, is liberty, moral liberty, the liberty of a moral agent; and this is an exemption from natural necessity and inability as before explained. He who is thus exempted, has a natural power of acting, just so far as this exemption extends. Even though "all circumstances necessary for action, have taken place," yet "then the mind can," in this sense, "act" in any particular



particular manner, or decline that action. For instance, when all circumstances necessary for Judas's betraying his Lord, had taken place, still he had a natural power either to betray him or not betray him. He was under no compulsion to betray him, to which his will did not consent. He was not, nor could he possibly be, under any such compulsion to *choose* to betray him. It is a contradiction, that the mind should *choose* to do a thing *involuntarily* and with an entire opposition of will.

If this be the liberty, for which Dr. West pleads, he has no ground of controversy on this head, with President Edwards, or with any who embrace his system. There is nothing in this inconsistent with the influence of motives on the will, to produce volition; or with the dependence of volition on some cause extrinsic to itself, extrinsic to the power of will, or to the mind in which it exists. What if motives do excite to volition? What if the connection between motive and volition be such, that volition never takes place without motive, and always takes place, when a proper motive appears? What if volition be the effect of a cause extrinsic to the will? Still it is true, that volition never takes place without the consent or with the entire opposition of the will. The will or mind then is still free, as it is exempted from natural necessity and has a natural or physical power to act otherwise.

If it be said, that it is not sufficient to liberty, that the mind act *with* its own consent, *in the act itself*; but it must in every free act, act *from* its own consent *previous* to the free act; I observe, that this implies, that in order to any free act, there must be an infinite series of free acts following one another. For instance, the objection supposes, that if I now freely choose to write remarks on Dr. West, this free choice must *arise from a previous* consent of my will, or from a previous choice, to write such remarks. Again, this previous choice, in order to be free, must for



the same reason arise from another previous free choice ; and so on *infinitely*, which is absurd.

Or if it should be said, that liberty implies not only an exemption from all *natural* or *physical* necessity, but also an exemption from all *moral* necessity ; then, as moral necessity is nothing but a previous certainty of the existence of any moral act, it will follow that any act, in order to be free, must come into existence without any previous certainty in the nature of things or in the divine mind, that it would exist ; *i. e.* no act can be free, unless it come into existence by *pure contingence* and *mere chance*,

But let us proceed to consider what Dr. West says in further explanation of his idea of liberty.

“ To act,” says he, “ to will or to choose, is to be free.” P. 16. If this be liberty, surely Dr. West could not imagine, that President Edwards, or any man in his senses, ever denied that we are free. It is to be presumed, that no man ever denied, that we determine, that we will, or that we choose. However, though I allow all these things, yet I cannot allow, that this is a true account of liberty. Will Dr. West pretend, that we are never free, but when we are in action ? That we have no liberty to determine, beside when we do actually determine ? That we have no liberty to will or choose, but when we are in the exercise of volition or choice ? Will he say, that he himself had no liberty to determine to write essays on liberty and necessity, before he actually determined to write them ? Dr. West, in p. 46, holds that there may be a certainty, that a man will do an action ; yet that he may have a physical power of doing the contrary. He would therefore doubtless grant, that he is at liberty to do the contrary, though he actually does it not ; and this whether the action be external or mental. Besides ; this definition of liberty is wholly inconsistent with the other favorite one of Dr. West, *viz. a power to act or not*. If liberty be a *power*, surely it is not an *action* ; but “ to act, to will



“will or to choose,” is an action. Especially if liberty be a power to *not act*, it cannot be *an action*. And if a power of acting, be action; a power of willing be volition; and a power of choosing be choice; then a power of walking or writing, and actual walking and writing is the same thing; and whoever is able to write, and so long as he is able, is actually employed in writing. Does Dr. West find by experience, that this is true?

I know there is a class of divines, who have holden, that God is free to good only, because he does good only; that the saints and angels in heaven are for the same reason free to good only; that Adam in paradise was free to both good and evil; that unregenerate sinners and devils are free to evil only; and that the regenerate in the present life are free to both good and evil. But I presume Dr. West would not choose to rank himself in this class.

Dr. S. Clarke is equally inconsistent in his definition of liberty, as Dr. West. “The whole essence of liberty,” says he, “consists in the *power* of acting. *Action* and *liberty* are *identical* ideas: And the true *definition* of a free being, is one that is endued with “a *power* of acting.” Remarks on Collins, p. 15. How true it is, that great men are not always wise! And how surprising, that Dr. Clarke, whom the advocates for self-determination, set up as unequalled in metaphysical acuteness, should contradict himself twice in four lines, in what required so much accuracy, as the definition of liberty! 1. The whole essence of liberty is here said to consist in a *power* of acting. 2. *Action* and *liberty* are said to be *identical* ideas; and therefore the *power* of action and *liberty* are not *identical* ideas, unless the *power* of action and *action* are *identical* ideas. 3. The true definition of a free being is said to be one that is endued with the *power* of acting. Thus the Doctor ends where he began, forgetful of the middle.



But that part of Dr. West's account of liberty, with which he seems to be most pleased, and on which he seems most to depend, remains yet to be considered. It is this, *a power to act or not act*, in all cases whatever. On this I observe, that if by *acting or not acting*, the Doctor mean choosing or refusing, I grant, that we have a *natural* power to do either of these in any case. But refusing is as real an act of the mind, as choosing, and therefore is very improperly called *not acting*. I grant, that we have a *natural* power to choose or refuse in any case; but we have no *moral* power, or power opposed to *moral necessity*: For moral necessity is previous certainty of a moral action; and a power opposed to this must imply a previous uncertainty. But no event moral or natural is or can be uncertain previously to its existence.—But if by a power to act or not act, the Doctor mean a power either to choose an object proposed, or to refuse it, or to do neither; this is an impossibility. Whenever an object is proposed for our choice, if there be any medium between choosing and refusing, it is a state of perfect blockish inaction and insensibility or *torpor*; and this inaction must be *involuntary*; as a *voluntary* inaction implies an act or volition, which is inconsistent with perfect inaction. A voluntary state of inaction and torpor is a contradiction in terms: It implies, that the mind is the subject of no act at all, and yet at the same time is the subject of a volition, by which it consents to inaction. Or if it should be said, that a voluntary state of inaction means a state, to which the mind is indeed reduced by an act of volition, and that the volition having accomplished a state of inaction, ceases itself to exist, and thus perfect and universal inaction follows; I observe, (1) That still this plea does not rid the matter of the contradiction. The cause of the perfect inaction is a volition. This cause must continue in existence and in operation, till the effect is accomplished; *i. e.* till entire and perfect inaction has actually taken place. And yet so long as  
 this



this cause continues to exist, it is a contradiction, that perfect and entire inaction should take place. (2) Besides this contradiction, if the mind could by an act of volition or by other means be reduced to a state of entire inaction and torpitude, this state would be utterly inconsistent with the exercise of any liberty. The man in this state can no more exercise liberty, than if he were under ever so great *natural* necessity, or than if he were turned into a stock or stone. During this state he cannot possibly put forth any act, to arouse himself from this *torpor*. It is in the power of no man, to reduce himself to this state, with respect to any object proposed to his choice; or when he is reduced to it, to recover himself from it.

If to this it should be objected, that we are entirely indifferent with regard to many objects; we neither choose nor refuse them: I answer, be this as it may with respect to objects not proposed for our choice; it is not true with respect to those, which are proposed for our choice; and this is all that I have asserted, and all that the subject requires me to assert; for Dr. West's account of liberty is "a power of acting; and by a power of acting, we mean, that when all circumstances necessary for action have taken place, the mind can act or not act;" *i. e.* when an occasion for volition, choice or determination, is presented; or when an object of choice, or an object, with respect to which we are to will or determine, is exhibited.

Mr. Locke's observations on this point are very pertinent and convincing: They are as follows; "A man in respect of willing, or the act of volition, when an action in his power is once proposed to his thoughts as presently to be done, cannot be free. The reason whereof is manifest — he cannot avoid willing the existence or not existence of that action; it is absolutely necessary, that he will the one or the other, *i. e.* prefer the one to the other, since one of them must necessarily follow; and that

" which



“ which does follow, follows by the choice and deter-  
 “ mination of his mind, that is, by his willing it. For  
 “ if he did not will it, it would not be. So that in re-  
 “ spect of the act of willing, a man in such a case is  
 “ not free : Liberty consisting in a power to act or not  
 “ act, which in regard of volition, a man upon such a  
 “ proposal has not. For it is unavoidably necessary  
 “ to prefer the doing or forbearance of an action in  
 “ a man’s power, which is once proposed to a man’s  
 “ thoughts. A man must necessarily will the one or  
 “ the other of them, upon which preference or voli-  
 “ tion the action or its forbearance certainly follows  
 “ and is truly voluntary. But the act of volition or  
 “ preferring one of the two, being that, which he can-  
 “ not avoid, a man in respect of that act of willing is  
 “ under a necessity.—This then is evident, that in  
 “ all proposals of present action, a man is not at liber-  
 “ ty to will or not to will ; because he cannot forbear  
 “ willing.”——“ A man that is walking, to whom it is  
 “ proposed to give off walking, is not at liberty,  
 “ whether he *will* determine himself to walk or give  
 “ off walking, or no. *He must necessarily prefer one or*  
 “ *tother of them, walking or not walking.*”——“ The  
 “ mind in that case has not a power to forbear willing :  
 “ It cannot avoid *some* determination.—It is man-  
 “ ifest, that it orders and directs one in preference to,  
 “ or in the neglect of the other.” Dr. West himself  
 gives up his favourite power of *not acting*, in the fol-  
 lowing passage : “ As soon as ideas are presented to  
 “ the mind its active faculty is exerted, and the mind  
 “ continues constantly acting, as long as it has ideas,  
 “ just as the act of seeing takes place the very instant  
 “ the eye is turned to the light, and continues as long  
 “ as the light strikes the eye.” Part II. p. 9. “ The  
 “ mind is always acting.” P. 10. If it continue to  
 act as long as it has ideas, as the eye continues to see  
 as long as the light strikes it ; then the mind has no  
 power of not acting, while it has ideas. And I think  
 it will not be pretended that the mind has a power to  
 banish



banish from itself, all ideas at pleasure. This would be a *torpor* indeed! a torpor of the understanding as well as of the will! And if the mind be always acting, it never exercises the power of not acting.

Doctor West thinks it strange, that his private correspondent does not know what the Doctor means by *a power to act or not act*; and the Doctor proceeds to give several instances of it, as of a man, who had been confined in prison, set at liberty to go out or still to tarry in prison; and of an husbandman, who has the offer of a farm, on certain conditions, and he is at liberty to take the farm or not. But neither of these is an instance of *a power to act or not act*; they are mere instances of a natural power to act differently, to act one way or another. If the man who has the offer to go out of the prison, choose to tarry in it; he as really acts as if he had chosen to go out. If the husbandman choose to decline the farm offered him, this is as real and positive an act, as if he had chosen to take it. And the Doctor, though he has attempted to give an instance of a power to act or not act, has not given one. For this reason, as well as from the nature of the case, I believe it is not in his power to give an instance of it. If it be in his power, I wish him to do it. He acknowledges this to be "the main point, on which the hinge of the whole controversy turns." A power to act or not act, is his definition of that liberty, for which he contends, and in support of which he has written his two books. And if he be not able to give a single instance of such a power, it is high time for him to give it up, and the whole controversy, of which this is the hinge. No wonder Dr. West's correspondent did not understand what the Doctor meant by this power, if the Doctor himself did not understand it so far as to be able to give an instance of it.—*A power to act or not act* must either mean a power to choose or refuse; or a power to act, or to cease from all action in either choosing or refusing. If the former be the meaning,  
it



it is no more than we all grant, provided by power be meant *natural* power. But if in this case *moral* power be intended, a power opposed to moral necessity, which is the previous certainty of a moral action; this we utterly deny, because it implies, that there is a previous perfect uncertainty in the nature of things and in the divine mind, whether we shall choose or refuse the proposed object.—If the last be the meaning of *a power to act or not act*, as this is a power to sink ourselves into a state of unfeeling and blockish torpor, I appeal to the reader, whether Dr. West, or Limborch, or any other man, has ever had or can have any idea of such a power; or if they have, whether it would be any desirable liberty, or would imply any qualification for moral agency.

I am sensible, that Dr. West tells us, that he has given a definition of “a power to act or not act,” and that this definition is, “that there is no infallible connection between motive and volition.” But this, which he calls a definition, does not at all relieve the difficulty. If it mean, that when motives are presented, the person can comply with them, or can refuse to comply, or can neither comply nor refuse; I deny it, declare it to be an impossibility, and call on Dr. West to shew the possibility of it. If when he says, there is no infallible connection between motive and volition, he mean, that the mind may act, whether in choosing or refusing, without motive; this is contrary to Dr. West himself.

The Doctor, in p. 86 and 87, Part II, resumes the question of acting or not acting, and mentions several cases, which he considers as instances of not acting; *e. g.* when of two objects one is chosen and the other not; when of the spots on a chess-board, A is touched and B not, &c. But not one of these is a better instance of not acting, than there always is, when any one thing is chosen and not another, or in preference to another. Suppose a man to offer a beggar a shilling and a guinea, of which he may have his



his choice, and he take the guinea; will it be said, that his leaving the shilling is an instance of not acting? Then we never do any thing, without at the same time not acting; *i. e.* while we do one thing, we omit many other things, which we might do. If this be what Dr. West means by not acting, it is readily granted; but it comes to little or nothing; it is a mere power to do some things and to refuse or omit some other things. This power is consistent with the most infallible connection between motives and volitions. Whenever under the influence of motives, we do some things, we certainly have a power to do those things, and to omit other things, which in fact we do not.

Dr. Clarke in his Remarks on Collins, p. 6, says, "All power of acting essentially implies, at the same time, a power of not acting: Otherwise it is not acting, but barely a being acted upon by that power, which causes the action." If he mean by *power, natural or physical* power, as before explained; and if by *not acting* he mean, *refusing or voluntary forbearing* to act in a certain proposed manner; I agree with Dr. Clarke. But if by *power to act*, he mean something opposed to moral necessity or inability, which is a previous certainty, that the action will or will not take place, in this case power to act will be a previous uncertainty concerning the existence of the action: And in this sense of the words, the Doctor's proposition, that a "power of acting essentially implies a power of not acting," will amount to this merely, that a previous uncertainty concerning the existence of an action, essentially implies a previous uncertainty concerning the non-existence of the same action: Which is mere trifling.—If the Doctor mean by *not acting*, entire inaction, I deny that a natural power to act implies a power to fall into entire inaction and torpitude. Nor does an uncertainty whether we shall act in any particular manner, imply an uncertainty whether we shall be perfectly inactive and torpid.

Dr.



Dr. West, supposes *self-determination* is essential to liberty ; but his account of self-determination is equally inexplicit, as his account of liberty. “ We use self-determination,” says he, “ not to signify, that self acts on self and produces volition ; or that the mind some how determines to will ; *i. e.* wills to will, or chooses to choose. But the sense in which we use self-determination is simply this, that we ourselves determine ; *i. e.* that we ourselves will or choose ; that we ourselves act ; *i. e.* that we are agents and not mere passive beings ; or in other words, that we are the determiners in the active voice, and not the determined in the passive voice.” P. 17.—Now one would expect, that in all this profusion of words, in this variety of expression, with the help of three *i. e.*s. we should have a most clear and explicit account of self-determination. But the account is entirely inexplicit, and equally consistent with President Edwards’s scheme of necessity, as with the opposite scheme. He holds, that we ourselves determine ; but he does not hold, that we are the efficient causes of our own determinations. Nor can Dr. West consistently hold this ; as this would imply, that our determinations or volitions are effects, which Dr. West denies. President Edwards holds, that we ourselves will or choose ; that we ourselves act and are agents : But he does not hold, that we efficiently cause our own mental acts : Nor for the reason already given, can Dr. West consistently hold this. Besides, this would imply, that “ self acts on self and produces volition,” or that “ the mind some how determines to will ;” *i. e.* “ wills to will, or chooses to choose,” which the Doctor renounces. President Edwards does not hold, that we are *mere* passive beings, unless this expression mean, that our volitions are the effects of some cause extrinsic to our wills.\* If this be the meaning of it, he does hold it, and the believers in his

\* In causes extrinsic to the will I include both original and acquired taste, bias, propension, or whatever it be called.



his system are ready to join issue with Dr. West, on this point. Though we hold that our volitions are the effects of some extrinsic cause, and that we are passive, as we are the subjects of the influence of that cause; yet we hold, that we are not *merely* passive; but that volition is in its own nature an act or action, and in the exercise of it we are active, though in the causation of it we are passive so far as to be the subjects of the influence of the efficient cause. This we concede; and let our opponents make the most of it: We fear not the consequence. In this sense we hold, "that we are determiners in the active voice, and not *merely* determined in the passive voice." We hold, that we are determiners in the active voice, in every sense which does not imply, that "self acts on self and produces volition; or that the mind some how wills to will, and chooses to choose," which Dr. West utterly denies; and "he entirely joins with Mr. Edwards in exploding the idea, that the will determines all the present acts of the will."

Though we are determiners in the active voice, and not *merely* determined in the passive voice; yet our determination may be the consequence of sufficient motive or the effect of some other extrinsic cause. We see, hear, feel, love and hate, in the active voice; yet we are or may be caused to see, hear, &c. And when we are caused to love or hate, we are indeed the subjects of the agency or influence of some cause extrinsic to our own will, and so far are passive: Still the immediate effect of this agency is our act, and in this act we are certainly active. So that we are not *merely* in the passive voice caused to love, but we also in the active voice *love*. Dr. West will not say, that because a man is influenced or persuaded by proper motives to the love of virtue, he does not love it at all in the active voice. Yet it is often said by men of his class, that if we be influenced to will or choose an object, it is no action at all. It is indeed no action in their sense  
of



of the word, as they mean by action, *self-determination*: But instead of taking it for granted, that this is the true sense of the word *action*, they ought to show the reality and possibility of such an action, and remove the absurdities, which are said to be inseparable from it.—To say, that we are self-determined or self-moved, because we ourselves determine and move, is as improper and groundless, as to say, that a body is self-moved and self-determined in its motion, because the body itself moves. Extrinsic causality is no more excluded in the one case, than in the other.

The Doctor puts the case of his choosing coffee, when that, tea and chocolate were offered him, and all appeared equally eligible; and says, “I believe, that  
“it will be impossible in this and a multitude of similar instances, to assign any accident or circumstance, which determines the mind to its choice among things, which appear equally fit and eligible. Consequently  
“here is an undeniable proof of the liberty for which we contend.” The liberty for which he here contends, is a power to choose one of several equally eligible things. If by *power* he mean *natural* or *physical* power, I grant, that we have such a power to choose not only one of several things equally eligible, if any such there be, but one of things ever so unequally eligible, and to take the least eligible. A man may be under no involuntary restraint from taking an object ever so ineligible. But if by power to choose one of several equally eligible things, he mean a power opposed to moral necessity, it is a previous uncertainty which he will choose. But there is in this case no more previous uncertainty in the nature of things and in the divine mind, than in any case whatever.

The Doctor denies, that “any accident or circumstance,” or any extrinsic cause, “determines the mind to its choice among things which appear equally eligible.” If this were granted, though it is not, what would follow? Doubtless either that the choice is determined and caused by the mind itself, or that it comes



comes into existence without cause. But Dr. West cannot with consistency hold either of these. To hold that choice or volition is caused by the mind, is to hold, that it is an effect and has a cause, which Dr. West denies, and has written an essay to prove it. It is also to hold, that "self acts on self and produces volition ; or that the mind some how determines to will, *i. e.* wills to will or chooses to choose," and that "the will determines the present acts of the will ;" all which are denied by Dr. West. On the other hand, that volition comes into existence without cause, though this is maintained by the Doctor, in that he maintains, that "volition is no effect and has no cause ;" yet it is also denied and renounced by him, in that he says, p. 27, "We cannot be charged with holding, that events take place without cause."

In p. 19, he says, "All who believe there is a Deity, must grant, that he has a self-determining power : For he being the first cause, his volitions cannot be determined by any cause antecedent or extrinsic to himself." If by self-determining power here be meant, what Dr. West says he means *simply*, That the Deity himself has a power to determine ; that he himself has a power to will or choose ; we grant, that not only the Deity, but all intelligent beings have a self-determining power. A self-determining power according to this definition, is nothing but a power of will, which we all grant belongs to every intelligent and moral agent. Nor does this imply any thing inconsistent with the idea, that the Deity and all other intelligent beings are governed by motives, in the only sense in which we hold government by motives ; which is, that the Deity does every thing which he does, because there is a motive to do it, arising from his own infinite wisdom and goodness.—But if by self-determining power, be meant a power by which God produces volition in himself, by which "self acts on self and produces volition," we join with Dr. West in reprobating such a power. He expressly says, "The  
C "divine



“divine volitions are no effects produced by the Deity.” P. 28.—If any thing else be meant, whenever Dr. West will inform us what it is, (as we cannot imagine any beside one or other of the forementioned senses) we will inform him, whether we allow or deny it, and will give our reasons.

As to the argument, that “The Deity being the first cause, his volitions cannot be determined by any cause antecedent or extrinsic to himself;” it may be answered, Still he may will as he does, because of motives and reasons arising from his own infinite wisdom and goodness. It may be further said, that the same argument, which Dr. West here uses to prove, that God determines himself, will prove, that God created himself: Thus, All who believe that there is a Deity, must grant, that he has a self-creating power and did create himself. For he being the first cause, his existence cannot be caused by any thing antecedent or extrinsic to himself. But it no more follows from the consideration, that God’s *volitions* were not caused by any thing antecedent or extrinsic to God, that they were caused by God, than from the consideration, that his *existence* was not caused by any thing antecedent or extrinsic to himself, it follows, that it was caused by himself. The truth is the divine volitions were no more caused, whether by God himself or by any other cause, than the divine existence was. The divine volitions are the divine holiness uncreated and self-existent. And one attribute of God is not more caused or created, than all his attributes, or than his existence.

An exemption from extrinsic causality, in the acts of the mind, is essential to Dr. West’s idea of liberty. Suppose then, that a free volition is one that comes into existence without any dependence on a cause extrinsic to the mind, which is the subject of that volition; the consequence is, that either such a volition is caused by the mind itself, and “self acts on self and produces volition;” or it is absolutely without cause, and comes into existence by mere chance; neither of which



which will Dr. West avow : Indeed he has already expressly disavowed them both. And if he either expressly, or by necessary implication, avows them both, that does not help the matter ; to be inconsistent relieves no difficulty.

Liberty is by some writers distinguished into external and internal. Internal or the liberty of the mind, is the principal subject of the present inquiry ; and this, as is implied in what has been said already, consists in the power or faculty of will. Every intelligent being who has this power, is free, or has internal liberty, and so long as he retains this power, cannot be divested of liberty. I am sensible, that our opponents suppose, that something further, viz. a self-determining power is necessary to liberty : And to this I shall particularly attend in the next chapter. As internal liberty consists in the very faculty of the will, so that which is external consists in opportunity externally to execute our determinations and wishes. To define internal moral liberty to be, “ an opportunity and capacity of choosing and acting otherwise than the subject in fact does,” is nothing distinguishing between the system of those who hold, that all moral actions are morally necessary, and that of those who deny it. “ Opportunity and capacity of choosing otherwise,” may mean mere *natural* power, as before explained. When Pharaoh chose to retain the Israelites, he was under no natural inability of choosing to let them go. Still it was a matter of previous absolute certainty, that he would for a time refuse to let them go, and had been divinely foretold.—If “ opportunity and capacity of choosing otherwise, than the subject in fact does,” mean any thing inconsistent with the most absolute moral necessity, it must mean a previous uncertainty how he will choose : And if this be the meaning in the aforesaid definition of moral liberty ; I deny that any man has in this sense opportunity to choose otherwise than he does. Every event and consequently every act of choice, is previously



ously foreknown by God and therefore is previously certain : And to take it for granted, that any is previously to its existence, uncertain in the divine mind and in reality, is an intolerable begging of the question.

The following account has been given of liberty, as opposed to moral necessity : “ I find I can abstain from any particular good ; I can defer using it ; I can prefer something else to it ; I can hesitate in my choice ; in short, I am my own master to choose, or which is the same thing, I am *free*.” Perhaps this is as popular a representation of liberty and as agreeable to the ideas of those who are the most zealous advocates for liberty as opposed to moral necessity, as can be given.—But all this is talking in the dark and confounding the subject by the use of ambiguous words ; particularly the word *can*. To say, “ I *can* abstain from any particular good,” is the very same as to say, I have *power* to abstain, &c. But there are two senses to the words power and inability already noticed and explained. In one sense Pharaoh had power to let the Israelites go ; he was under no *natural* inability in the case. Still there was an absolute previous certainty, that he would not for a time let them go. Therefore there was a moral necessity, that he should not let them go, and he was morally unable to let them go ; and in this sense he was not free ; it was not a matter of uncertainty whether he would let them go or not.—This account of liberty reminds me of the argument, by which a certain man endeavoured to convince his neighbour, that there were no divine absolute decrees. The argument was, that having a child newly born, he felt himself at liberty to call it by what name he pleased, without regard to any divine decree. As if God had decreed, that he should call his child by a particular name, whether with or without his own consent.

Liberty or freedom must mean freedom from something. If it be a freedom from coercion or natural necessity, this is what we mean by freedom. The  
mind:



mind in volition is in its own nature free. But our opponents mean by freedom an exemption from all extrinsic causal influence, and from all previous certainty. And when they hold, that the mind causes its own volitions, they must, to be consistent, hold that it causes them contingently and without any previous certainty that it would cause them; and they must deny that the mind's causation of them is determined, fixed or limited by any cause whatever. For that the mind should cause them according to a previous establishment, would be as inconsistent with liberty, as that it should not cause them at all, as it implies an entire limitation of the mind in its operations.

The very inquiry, whether the mind in the exercise of the will, or as possessed of the power of will, be free, is apt to lead into error. It seems to imply, that freedom is something else than the freedom of the will. To inquire whether the mind as possessed of will be free, is to inquire whether the mind as possessed of freedom be free; or whether freedom be freedom.

Men in general have no other idea of freedom, than a power of will, or an exemption from coercion or natural necessity, as their language on the subject implies no more than this. With them to act *freely*, and to act *voluntarily* is the same thing, and they never once think of propagating one free act by an antecedent free act, or that in order to freedom it is requisite, that the acts of their wills should come to pass without cause and by mere chance: Nor do they once imagine, that in order to freedom, there must be no previous certainty what their acts will be; or that the divine foreknowledge or prediction is inconsistent with liberty.

Liberty in the sense of our opponents, is not possible or conceivable. By liberty they mean a power to cause all our own volitions, and to cause them freely. But that we should thus cause them, is neither possible nor conceivable. If we should thus cause a volition, we should doubtless cause it by a causal act:



It is impossible, that we cause any thing without a causal act. And as it is supposed, that we cause it freely, the causal act must be a *free act*, *i. e.* an act of the will or a volition. And as the supposition is, that all our volitions are caused by ourselves, the causal volition must be caused by another, and so on infinitely : Which is both impossible and inconceivable. It is no more possible or conceivable, that we should cause all our own volitions, than that all men should beget themselves.

Some have said, that volition or voluntary exercise is *liberty*. It is undoubtedly a *free act* and liberty is a property of that act ; but it is not more proper to call it *liberty* itself, than to call the apprehension of the equality between the three angles of a triangle and two rights, *intellect*, because it is an act of intellect. The flying of a bird at large in the open air is a *free act*, but not *liberty* itself.

Our opponents say, they plead for *that liberty, in men to do as they please*. By this with respect to the mind, they must mean, either that the mind causes its own volitions, or that it acts voluntarily. As to the first, it has been in part considered already, and shall be further attended to in the next chapter. The last is no more than we all allow ; and for our opponents to mean this only, is to give up the dispute.

It is generally if not universally granted by our opponents, that God is *necessarily holy* ; and to be sure, the scripture assures us, that “ he cannot lie,” and “ cannot deny himself.” And Dr. West grants, that he is *perfectly holy*, p. 38 ; and that he is *immutable*, *ibid.* Therefore he is *immutably* and *necessarily* holy. Yet the Doctor supposes God to possess a self-determining power. And although his *definition* of self-determination, as observed before, is not at all inconsistent with the necessity which we hold ; yet it is manifest, that he supposes self-determination to be inconsistent with that necessity. And did he mean, in ascribing self-determination to the Deity, to ascribe something



Something to him inconsistent with *immutable* and *necessary* holiness? Does he believe, that it is not *absolutely certain*, that God will for ever continue to be holy? Yet absolute *certainty*, as I have often said, is all the necessity for which we plead. The Doctor therefore has fallen into a dilemma, or rather a trilemma, and he may make his choice, whether to concede, that there is no self-determination in God, and that therefore it is not necessary to liberty; or that self-determination is not at all inconsistent with absolute moral necessity, and then he will give up the dispute; or to hold that God is not necessarily holy, and that he *can lie* and *can deny himself*: I wait for the Doctor's decision or explanation.

It is well known, that Dr. S. Clarke places liberty in self-determination or self-motion; and he holds, that "liberty in the highest and completest degree is in God himself;" and "that God is a most perfectly free agent;" yet he immediately adds, that "he cannot but do always what is best and wisest in the whole. The reason is evident; because perfect wisdom and goodness are as *steady* and *certain* principles of action, as *necessity* itself." Perfect wisdom and goodness therefore imply a *certainty* of action. But *certainty* is the *necessity* in question. How then can any liberty or self-determination inconsistent with absolute moral necessity, coexist in the Deity with that necessity?—Thus the most able advocates for self-determination, and Dr. Clarke as much as any of them, are necessitated by their absurd and contradictory system, perpetually to contradict themselves.

Most of our opponents hold, that we are the efficient causes of our own volitions, and that in this our liberty consists. But Dr. West expressly denies this with regard to the Deity; p. 28; "The divine volitions are no effects, either produced by the Deity, or by any extrinsic cause." Indeed that volitions are no effects of any cause, is a favourite and principal doctrine of Dr. West. Therefore the self-deter-



mination which he ascribes to both God and man, produces no volition in either. What then does it? How does it contribute at all to liberty? In the Deity it is consistent with absolute moral necessity, as we have just seen; and what reason can be given, why it is not as consistent with the like necessity in man?

Or does liberty in God consist in a contingency or previous uncertainty of his volitions? This, it is presumed, will not be pretended; as it overthrows the divine immutability, and is directly contradictory to what our opponents, particularly Dr. Clarke and Dr. West, hold, of the *necessity* of God's moral perfections. And if liberty in God do not require such contingency and uncertainty, let a reason be given why it should in man.—We deny, that causing our own volitions and acting by chance are either realities or possibilities; but if they were both possible and real; since they do not belong to the liberty of God, need we wish for any more liberty or higher kind of liberty and power, than God has? Or shall we vainly imagine, that we possess it?

Liberty is no *positive* existence. Existence or being is divided into *substance* and *mode*. But liberty is certainly no *substance*. Modes are divided into absolute or positive, and relative. Liberty, as it is a power, falls into the latter class; it is a relative mode. All powers are relations or relative modes. It is then, as I said, no *positive* existence.

I have long since thought, that this controversy concerning *liberty* and necessity, so long agitated, might be easily settled to mutual general satisfaction, if the disputants would but fully explain their own ideas of the subjects of the dispute. But till this is done, what prospect or possibility is there of settling it? Our opponents accuse us of denying the liberty of moral agents. Now the truth or falsehood of this charge depends on the ideas they affix to the word *liberty*. If by *liberty* be meant what Law in his notes on King, p. 248, defines it to be, “ A certain physical  
“ indifference



“indifference or indeterminateness in its own exercise ;” then we do deny liberty. We deny that a man is or can be indifferent in the exercise of his liberty or his will.—Or if by liberty be meant, an exemption from all previous certainty, so that it is a matter of uncertainty and mere chance, what our volitions are to be ; in this sense also we deny liberty.—Further, if by liberty be meant, an exemption from all extrinsic causality or influence, so that our volitions are efficiently caused by ourselves ; this also we deny.—But if by liberty be meant a power of willing and choosing, an exemption from coercion and natural necessity, and power, opportunity and advantage to execute our own choice ; in this sense we hold liberty.

We wish our opponents to tell us with the same precision, what *they* mean by liberty and in what sense they contend for it. Unless they do this, it signifies nothing for them to tell us, that we deny all liberty, and that they are contending for liberty against necessity ; and as Dr. West has done, to give such general and vague definitions of liberty, of self-determination, &c. as are perfectly consistent with our ideas of liberty and free action.



## CHAPTER III.

*Of Self-Determination.*

LIBERTY and self-determination are so blended by our opponents in this controversy, that it is impossible to write a chapter on one of these subjects, with proper attention to the sentiments of our opponents, without running into the other. Therefore in the last chapter I was necessitated to say many things concerning self-determination. Yet I wish to make some further observations on the same subject.

All our opponents agree, that self-determination is essential to liberty. Let us first attend to what Dr. West says on this subject; then we shall make some remarks on what Dr. Clarke and others have said.

Dr. West tells us, that “determining, when we apply it to the active faculty, is the same with volition.” P. 16, 17. And “the sense in which we use *self-determination* is simply this, that we ourselves determine; *i. e.* that we ourselves will or choose.” Now I cannot believe, that Dr. West imagined, that President Edwards, or any of his followers, would deny, that we ourselves determine, will and choose. We doubtless will and choose as really as we think, see, hear, feel, &c. But who or what is the efficient cause in either case, remains to be considered. To say, that we are determiners in the active voice, and not the determined in the passive voice, gives no satisfaction. We grant, that we are determiners in the active; and yet assert, that we are determined, or are caused to determine, by some extrinsic cause, at the same time, and with respect to the same act: As when a man hears a sound, he is the hearer in the active voice, and yet is caused to hear the same sound, by something extrinsic to himself. It will not be pretended, that a man is the efficient cause of his own hearing, in every instance in which he hears in the active voice.

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Though Dr. West in general maintains, and has written an essay to prove, that volition is no effect and has no cause ; yet he sometimes forgets himself and falls in with the generality of the defenders of the self-determining power, who hold, that the mind is the efficient cause of its own volitions. He every where maintains, that volition is not the effect of an *extrinsic* cause ? Why does he express himself thus, if he do not suppose it to be the effect of an *intrinsic* cause ? The expression implies this. This is not all. In p. 24, he puts the question, “ whether the mind in choosing or acting, do not modify itself ? ” which he answers in the affirmative, and says, that this “ modification is the effect of the mind willing or choosing.” The mind then in willing modifies itself, *i. e.* brings itself into the mode of willing. This mode then is volition ; and this volition is the effect of the mind willing, or the effect of volition. So that Dr. West here, in direct contradiction to his general doctrine, asserts, agreeably to Dr. Clarke and most writers of his class, that volition is an effect and has a cause ; is the effect of the mind whose volition it is, and is the effect of the mind willing or of a volition of that mind. Agreeably to this he says, p. 28, “ No agent can bring any effects to pass, but what are *consequent* upon his acting ; *i. e.* that all effects are in consequence of the activeness or operativeness of some being : ” And p. 22, “ No being can become a cause, *i. e.* an efficient, or that which produces an effect, but by *FIRST* operating, acting or energising : ” And in the same page, “ Volition, when used intelligibly ——— is really an efficient cause.” Volition then is an efficient cause, and an efficient cause of a modification of the mind, which is another volition, and this by *first* operating, acting or energising : And doubtless this operation, act or energising is a volition. So that here we have three volitions in train, all necessary to the existence of one volition and of every volition. The *first* volition is an efficient cause of a *second*, called by Dr.

West



West a modification of the mind ; and it produces this effect by a *third* volition, which is the *operation, act, or energising of the first*.—What is this, but “ self acting on self and producing volition,” and this by the instrumentality of an intermediate volition. Dr. West cannot consistently deny any of these absurdities of his scheme. He cannot say, that one volition, as an efficient cause, does not produce a second ; as he holds, that “ the mind in willing modifies itself.” But according to him volition is the mind willing. He also holds, that the said “ modification is the effect of “ the mind willing ;” *i. e.* by his own definition, the effect of volition ; volition then is the *efficient cause* of the said modification. That this modification is volition he will not deny. Then we have one volition as an efficient cause, producing another volition as its effect. But he grants that “ no being can produce an effect, but by *first, acting or energising*.” This gives us the intermediate volition.

It has been long since charged on the advocates for self-determination, that their doctrine involves the absurdity of one volition before every volition, and even before the first. But Dr. West has made improvement in the scheme : He has taught us, that self-determination implies *two volitions* before every volition and before the *first*.

That volition is produced by the mind, as the efficient cause, is implied, however inconsistently with himself, in various other passages of Dr. West's books ; as p. 25, “ If volition or internal action be the effect of an extrinsic cause, our reflections could never afford us an example of an efficient cause.” “ As we are rational beings, it follows, that our volitions are not the effects of an *extrinsic* cause, but that we are *self-determined*.” “ Conscious, that we ourselves are the determiners and not the determined — we have the idea of our independence in willing and choosing.” Our volition must either be the effect of an extrinsic cause, or of an intrinsic one, or it must hap-  
pen



pen without cause. If it happen without cause, our reflections could no more afford us an example of an efficient cause, than they would on the supposition, that it is the effect of an extrinsic cause. So that the Doctor's argument necessarily implies, that volition is produced by the mind as the efficient cause. In the second quotation above, he speaks of our being self-determined, as in direct opposition to our volitions being effects of an extrinsic cause. But there is no such opposition unless by our being self-determined be meant, that our volitions are the effects of an intrinsic cause. If self-determination here mean no more than that we are the *subjects* of a determination, or that we ourselves determine, as we ourselves think, feel, &c. this may be, and yet that determination may be the effect of an extrinsic cause. So that there appears to be no meaning in this passage, unless, in direct contradiction to what Dr. West elsewhere holds, it mean, that our volitions are *effects* and have an *efficient cause*; that this cause is our own mind; and this efficient cause, as the Dr. declares all efficient causes do, produces its effect, "by first operating, acting or energising;" and thus self would act "on self and produce volition," by an efficient operation.—Again; if we were "conscious, that we ourselves are the determiners, and not the determined," we should thence derive no "idea of our independence in willing and choosing," if our willing and choosing either were the effect of an extrinsic cause, or happened without cause; or unless we were the efficient causes of our own willing and choosing.

Though all this is abundantly denied and renounced by Dr. West, as appears by quotations already made; yet it is the real ground work of his book, and the only ground, on which he could consistently oppose the doctrine of moral necessity and extrinsic causality of volitions: And this is the common doctrine of the advocates for self-determination. Thus Dr. Clarke, in Papers between him and Leibnitz, p. 289, tells us, "The true and only question concern-

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“ing liberty, is, whether the immediate physical cause  
 “or principle of action be indeed in him, whom we  
 “call the agent; or whether it be some other reason  
 “sufficient, which is the real cause of the action, by  
 “operating upon the agent and making him to be,  
 “not the agent but a mere patient.” I understand  
 the Doctor by physical cause, to mean efficient, pro-  
 ducing cause; otherwise it is not to the purpose.

Dr. Chauncy is still more explicit. “Self-deter-  
 “mination gives rise to our volitions ——— and is  
 “the cause of them.” *Benevolence of the Deity*, p. 128.  
 “A power in man, that subjects *his volitions to his*  
 “*command*, is the only bottom, upon which agency  
 “can be founded.” *Ibid*, p. 129. And in the next  
 page he says, the same power “constitutes us agents,  
 “or beings that are *efficiently the causes* of their own  
 “volitions.”

Now this self-determination, which “gives rise to  
 our volitions,” and in which we are “the efficient  
 “causes of our own volitions,” is a determination or  
 act either of the will, or of some other faculty. If it  
 be an act of the will, it is a volition. So that here  
 we have one volition caused by another: And as the  
 doctrine is, that all our volitions are the effect of self-  
 determination, they are all the effect of volition, the  
 causing act the effect of a preceding act, and the first  
 the effect of one before that. This absurdity attend-  
 ing the scheme of self-determination, has been long  
 since pointed out; nor have the advocates of that  
 scheme been able to show, that their scheme does not  
 really labour under that absurdity, if by that self-de-  
 termination, which is the cause of volition, they mean  
 an act of the will.

But if this self-determination be an act of the un-  
 derstanding; then it seems, that the will or mind wil-  
 ling, is influenced to volition by a dictate of the un-  
 derstanding, or by a motive. Then we are at once  
 involved in what is so hideous to Dr. West, and all  
 other believers in self-determination, the government  
 by



by motives and the moral necessity implied in it : Also our volitions are determined by extrinsic causes and we are the passive subjects of the operation of those causes.

Or if we suppose the determining act to proceed from any other faculty, if other there be, the difficulty will remain. Dr. West holds, "that there are three essential faculties of the mind, which ought always to be considered distinctly ; and these are *perception*, *propension* and *will* ;" and that "the last only is properly the active faculty." Then doubtless that self-determination, which is an *action*, and which gives rise to volition, is an act of this active faculty. In this case we have will putting forth self-determination, in order to give rise to volition ; as we had before volition as an efficient cause, first operating, acting or energising, in order to produce the effect volition. As the will is, according to the Doctor, "the only active faculty," he will not pretend, that volition produced by self-determination, is the effect of either of the other two faculties, as he reckons them, perception and propension. If he should say, that it is the effect of *perception* ; this it seems is a passive faculty ; and then self-determination and all volition are the effects of a passive faculty and of passion, of which alone that faculty is by the terms capable ; and therefore, it seems, self-determination and volition must themselves be passions or mere impressions, and we are passive in them. Besides, perception considered as a faculty, as Dr. West singularly considers it, appears to be nothing else, than intellect or the power of understanding. And if self-determination proceed from this, the consequence is, that the will is governed by the understanding and by the dictates and motives which it suggests ; which brings us where we were before, into the midst of necessity. The same consequence will follow, if we suppose, that self-determination proceed from *perception* in the common sense of the word, meaning *an act* of the understanding



ing.—If Dr. West say, that self-determination proceeds from *propension*; then he entirely coincides with President Edwards, who ascribes a great part of our volitions to disposition, inclination, passion and habit, meaning certain biases of the mind distinct from volition and prior to it.—Besides; as propension is according to the Doctor a passive faculty, if volition and self-determination proceed from this they are passions or impressions, they proceed from an extrinsic cause and we are passive in them.

The causing of one act of volition by another is attended with this absurdity also, it supposes the causing act in this case to be distinct from the act caused; when in reality they coalesce and are one and the same. For instance, to choose to have a choice of virtue, is nothing but a choice of virtue; to choose the choice of an apple, is to choose an apple: So that we have the volition before we have it, and in order that we may have it.

Some sensible of the absurdity of supposing, that the mind determines one volition by another, as this runs into an infinite series of volitions, and implies that there is volition before the first volition, have renounced this idea of self-determination. Among these we may reckon Dr. West. But at the same time he gives up self-determination in every sense in which we dispute it, and in every sense inconsistent with the most absolute moral necessity. This has been already illustrated.—Others, to avoid the same difficulty express themselves differently: They profess to mean, that volition is caused not by a preceding volition, but by *the man* or *the mind*, whose volition it is. But this gives no satisfaction. Supposing it should be said, that a certain carpenter himself was the efficient cause or builder of such a ship; and it should be thence inferred, that he built it by working, labouring or exerting himself to the end of building the ship; would not this be a natural and a necessary inference? Would not the man, who should  
assert,



assert, that the carpenter did indeed himself immediately build the ship, but not by any labour or exertion, whether of body or mind, be universally considered as talking absurdly and contradictorily? And does not the man talk as absurdly and contradictorily, who asserts, that a man is the efficient cause of his own volition, yet puts forth no exertion, in order to cause it? If any other way of efficiently causing an effect, than by act or exertion previous to the effect, be possible or conceivable, let it be pointed out: Till this be done, we who conceive such a way to be impossible and inconceivable, have a right to say so, and to presume, that our opponents, who assert that there is such a way, are unable to point it out, and have no more idea of it, than we have. If upon trial, they shall find, that they are unable to point out the way, let them honestly confess, that all they mean by self-determination is what we and all allow, that they are the *subjects* of volition, and as Dr. West expresses it, that *they themselves will and choose*.

I perfectly agree with Dr. West when he says, p. 22, "No being can become an efficient cause, but by FIRST *operating, acting or energising*." Operation, act or energising is as much presupposed in order to an effect, as an efficient cause is presupposed in order to it. To suppose an efficient cause to produce an effect without any act by which he produces it, is the same, as to suppose the same cause produces the effect, without any *efficiency*: It is as absurd, as it would be to suppose, that Dr. West wrote his essays without any exertion in order to the production of them, or that God created the world, without any creating act. If this be not true, let the falsehood of it be made to appear. Let any man show, that an effect cannot as well come to pass without an efficient cause, as without a causing act; and that the world could not as well have come into existence without a Creator, as without a creating act.

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Some of the advocates for self-determination hold; that the mind is the efficient cause of its own volitions, yet not by any *act* or *exertion* of the mind, but by the *power* or *faculty* of the will. And how can this power or faculty produce volition, unless it be exerted *first* in order to the effect? The man, who is the subject of a certain volition, had the power of will long since; yet it never produced that volition, we may suppose, till this moment. What is the cause or reason, that it produces it now and not before? To say, it does, because it will, is to say either, that this volition is produced by another preceding, which runs into the infinite series; or that the power of will, or rather the man in the exercise of that power, is the subject of volition, because he is the subject of it, which is mere trifling.— On the whole the existence of a power of will in a man, will no more account for any particular volition, of which he is the subject, than the existence of the *man* will account for the same volition, or the existence of a ship-carpenter will account for the building of a certain ship; or than Dr. West's having a power to write essays of Liberty and Necessity, will account for his actually writing them at the precise time, at which he did write them, or than his having an ear will account for his hearing a particular sound at a certain time.

That we have a power of will or of determining is granted on all hands: But that we should efficiently cause our power of will, to put forth a volition, without exerting any efficiency to this effect; only wants proof to make it credible, and explanation to make it intelligible or conceivable. Merely the circumstance, that we have a power to will and determine, no more proves, that without motive or any influence from without; and without any causing act within, we cause that power to exert itself; than the circumstance, that we have a power of hearing proves, that without any pulsation in the air, any causation  
from



from without or from within, we cause ourselves to hear a particular sound.

Some others, as well as Dr. West, have denied, that by self-determination they mean the causing of one act of the will by another. We have no objection to their denying this: But then we wish them to inform us explicitly, what they do mean. If they have any meaning they doubtless can express it intelligibly: And so long as they do not express a meaning different from what we mean by willing or choosing; and so long as their definitions of self-determination express, either bare volition, or the causing of one volition by another, though they insist, that they mean something different from either of these; I leave the reader to judge, whether they have any clear meaning to that word at all.

In conversation once with a gentleman of eminence among the advocates for self-determination he told me, that President Edwards had abused those who write in favour of self-determination, in representing them as holding, that the mind causes one act of volition by another. On my inquiring of the gentleman what then they did mean; his answer was, "They mean, that in determining the mind determines." Whether this answer at all explained the matter; or whether it convey any other idea, than that *the mind does determine, and has a volition*, without touching the question concerning the cause, extrinsic or intrinsic; I submit to the reader. If a man should say, that in walking, he walks; in writing he writes; in hearing he hears; it is presumed, that no man could certainly hence conclude, that the speaker meant, that he was not influenced to walk or write, by motive or by some extrinsic cause; or that his hearing was self-determined.

If we cause our own volitions at all, we cause them either by a previous volition, or without such volition. If we cause them by a previous volition, this is what I have been particularly considering, and shall say no more upon it. If we cause them without such voli-



tion, we cause them involuntarily, without any design, any motive or agency. Now I wish it may be inquired, whether such a causation of volition as this, if it be possible or conceivable, as I contend it is not, be at all more favourable to liberty, than that volition should proceed from the influence of motive or some other extrinsic cause; and whether it would be any advantage or privilege in any respect; and whether it would not be a great disadvantage and calamity to mankind, and an insupportable incumbrance on the influence of reason, revelation, virtue, duty and happiness both here and hereafter. For whatever any of these may dictate, and with whatever motives they enforce those dictates; whatever virtue and our own happiness may require, since the self-determining power is not influenced by these or any other motives; and since, as Dr. Clarke says, "There is no connection at all between the perception of the understanding and the exertion of the active faculty;" all those dictates and motives would be in vain; the self-determining power is a sovereign, ungovernable principle, perfectly deaf and unmoved by any motive, reason, argument or representation whether of duty or interest. It therefore destroys the very use not only of our reason, of revelation and of the motives of both; but of our affections, passions, appetites and senses, in every part of our conduct as moral agents. For so far as we are influenced by any of these, we are not self-determined, and therefore, according to our opponents, we are incapable of moral action; and especially are we not self-determined in the sense now particularly under consideration; causing our own volitions involuntarily and without a previous volition.

Self-determination uninfluenced by motive, is inconsistent with all religion and morality and with all virtue and vice. To love God without motive, principle, aim or end, is no religion. To love and do good to mankind in like manner, is no virtue. To hate God or mankind in like manner, is no irreligion.



tion or vice. Just so as to stealing, robbing, killing, &c.

The self-determining power is, as I said, an ungovernable principle. It not only cannot be governed by reason, revelation, &c. But not by any laws human or divine; for these are only motives. Nay, it cannot be governed by God, his providence or his grace. To be governed by either of these would be to be governed by an extrinsic cause, and under such government men would be passive. If God in his providence govern and control them and their actions, they are limited, and act only by permission, and have no power to act or not act, no liberty to either side, but are confined to one side. Where then is self-determination?—On the other hand, if men determine and control all their own actions, none of their actions are controlled by God.

Dr. Reid, a late strenuous advocate for self-determination says, “The name of a cause and of an agent, is properly given to that being only, which by its active power, produces some change in itself, or in some other being. The change, whether it be of thought, of will, or of motion, is the effect. Active power therefore is a quality in the cause, which enables it to produce the effect. And the exertion of that active power in producing the effect, is called action, agency, efficiency. In order to the production of any effect, there must be in the cause, not only power, but the exertion of that power: For power that is not exerted produces no effect.” *Essays on the Active Powers*, p. 259. Therefore if we be the efficient causes of our own volitions, as Dr. Clarke, Dr. Chauncy, &c. held, we must not only have a power to produce them, but there must be an exertion of power in order to the production of volition. This exertion is doubtless an exertion of the will. Thus we run into the infinite series several times mentioned. And however others attempt to evade the absurdities



of this infinite series, Dr. Reid and his followers must fall into them.

“All our power,” says Dr. Reid, *ibid*, 299, “is directed by our will ; we can form no conception of power, properly so called, that is not under the direction of our will.” Then we have no power to direct or determine our will, unless we go round in a circle. If our will direct *all* our power, as the Doctor asserts ; and our self-determining power direct and determine our will, then we go round in a circle, our will directing all our power, and our self-determining power directing our will. Glorious liberty this ! And this must be an age of glorious improvement and illumination, or we should never have made such discoveries as these ! Yet Dr. Reid had great reason to say, that all our power is directed by our will, otherwise some of our power might act involuntarily and our self-determining power (if we have any) might direct and govern us without our consent ; with which Dr. Reid’s scheme would very ill agree. Still the Doctor in this gives up a point, which he had before positively asserted and had laboured hard to establish, “that if the will be not, “nothing else is, in our power ;” p. 258. Now if the will be in our power, it is under our direction, or is directed by our power. So that we have the circle complete ; all “our power is directed by our will ;” and yet our will is directed by our power. Into what glaring inconsistencies will not men run, rather than give up a favourite and indefensible hypothesis ! Yet they are so blinded by their attachment to that hypothesis, that they see no inconsistency attending it.—The truth is, that both these principles, *that all our power is directed by our will ;* and *that our will is directed by our self-determining power,* are essential to the Doctor’s scheme, and to the scheme of all who hold a self-determining power. To reconcile these two principles deeply concerns them. But they have never yet been able to do it ; nor, it is presumed, ever will be able.

Some



Some of the writers in favour of self-determination seem to be sensible of the *mystery* in it ; particularly Dr. Chauncy. “ It is readily allowed,” says he, “ liberty in man, in opposition to necessity, is one of the great wonders of God. The power in our nature, that constitutes us free agents, is an *amazing* contrivance of infinite wisdom. The modus of its operation is *too great a deep* for us to fathom. It has *tried* and *puzzled* the greatest geniuses in all parts of the world.” *Benevolence of the Deity*, p. 135. No wonder then, that nobody has ever been able to give a consistent or intelligible account of this power. So long as those who believe in it, are puzzled with it, we may expect, that their accounts of it will be confused, unintelligible and contradictory. But the account of no one of them appears to be more contradictory than that of Dr. West. He gives up the idea of Dr. Clarke and Dr. Chauncy, that the mind is the efficient cause of its own volitions ; yet he falls into the same, in holding, that the mind in willing modifies itself, and that this modification is *the effect* of the mind willing, p. 24 ; and that we are independent in willing, p. 25. He holds that volition has no cause ; yet holds, that the modification made of the mind by itself in willing, is *the effect* of the mind willing. He holds that volitions have no cause ; yet denies, that he can be justly charged with holding, that events take place without a cause ; p. 27. Surely the Doctor can never expect, that his unbiassed readers will receive his system, until he shall have removed these inconsistencies.

Archbishop King is grossly inconsistent with himself, in holding, that the will determines itself to choose certain objects, without the influence of motive or any cause out of the will ; and yet holding, that the will is determined to choose those objects, because of the pleasure which will be in consequence of that choice. *Law's edition*, p. 276. In such a case the will is as much determined by motive, as if a man



were determined to go to a debauch, in the prospect of the sensual pleasure, which he expected there.

Dr. West says, p. 23, "Every effect is wholly passive with regard to the cause, which produces it." And this equally holds, whether the cause be extrinsic or intrinsic. "Consequently, if human volition be an effect" even of an intrinsic cause, "the man must be passive in willing. But if man be passive in willing, he can be active in nothing else; *i. e.* he is no agent, but a mere passive machine." What then is the great advantage, which the advocates for self-determining power and the intrinsic causation of volition, would gain, could they establish their favourite doctrine? According to their own scheme, every volition would be an *effect*, a *passive effect*, and "man must be passive in willing. But if man be passive in willing, he can be active in nothing else: *i. e.* he is no agent, but a mere passive machine." *Ibid.* More than this cannot be said on this head, if we suppose volition to be the effect of an *extrinsic* cause. Therefore they are grossly inconsistent with themselves in rejecting one of two hypotheses, on account of supposed absurdities, which equally attend the other, and yet retaining that other.

Although Dr. Clarke and others assert, that the true and only question concerning liberty, is, whether we be the efficient causes of our own volitions; yet they themselves would not abide by this concession. For if it were previously fixed and established, what particular volitions we should efficiently cause in ourselves, this would be as inconsistent with their ideas of liberty, as the supposition, that they are produced by an extrinsic cause. Gentlemen of that class universally hold, that absolute decrees are inconsistent with liberty, because they establish the actions decreed. Therefore if God have decreed that we ourselves shall efficiently cause such and such volitions in our own minds; this as effectually establishes and secures the existence of those volitions, as if he had decreed,  
that



that they should be effected by any other cause. Therefore not only does their idea of liberty require self-determination, but it equally requires perfect previous uncertainty and chance, and an entire exemption from all rule, limitation or confinement, so that the mind not only produces its own volitions; but produces them at random and by mere chance, without the influence of motive and without any previous certainty, what particular acts it shall produce, and whether any. Thus according to them self-determination is acting by chance and becoming the subject of volitions without any proper cause at all: For a cause that acts by chance and stupidly, without motive or design, is no proper efficient cause at all.

Dr. West says, p. 17, "We have set aside the notion, that the will determines all the present acts of the will: For we entirely join with Mr. Edwards in exploding that idea." What mystery there may be couched under the *will*, I will not pretend to say. But as he "entirely agrees with Mr. Edwards in exploding that idea," Dr. West must hold not only, that the will as a distinct power of the mind does not determine the present acts of the will; but that the *mind* in the exercise of the power of will, does not determine those acts. For this is equally exploded by Mr. Edwards, as the other. The Doctor says, that "the will does not determine *all* the *present* acts of the will." But does it determine *any* of the acts of the will, whether *present*, *past* or *future*? As he agrees in this particular with Mr. Edwards, he must answer in the negative. All *past* acts of the will were once present; and when they were present Dr. West denies, that the will determined them: And he will not say, that the will determines them now that they are past. Also all future acts of the will ere long will be present; and when they shall be present, they will not, according to Dr. West's concession, be determined by the will. Therefore he will not say, that they are determined by the will now, before they come in-

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to existence. Doubtless by whatever they are determined, they are determined by it at the very instant of their coming into existence. No cause produces an effect, at a time before or after the existence of that effect: Therefore by this concession of Dr. West it seems he holds, that no volition, past, present or future is determined by the will, or by the mind in the exercise of the will. Yet Dr. West strenuously pleads for a self-determining power: But what good purpose does this power answer, since it determines no act of will? It seems it is a very innocent and harmless thing, because it is very inefficacious and dormant, doing neither good nor hurt.

Dr. Clarke, in papers between Leibnitz and himself, p. 73, grants, that "nothing is, without a sufficient reason why it is, rather than not; and why it is thus, rather than otherwise. But" says, that "in things in their own nature indifferent, mere will, without any thing external to influence it, is alone that sufficient reason." By *will* the Doctor must mean either an *act* of volition, or the *power* of the will. If he mean that the former is the reason or ground of our acts of the will, he runs into the infinite series. If he mean the latter it is as absurd as to say, The ability of Dr. Clarke to write his replies to Leibnitz, was *alone* the sufficient reason why he wrote them.

Dr. Price in his correspondence with Dr. Priestly, p. 136, says, "It cannot be justly said, that self-determination implies an effect without a cause. Does it follow, that because I am myself the cause, there is no cause?" To this I answer, that though it does indeed not follow, that because I am myself the cause of a volition, there is no cause; as it is taken for granted, that there is a cause, and that I am that cause; yet from the supposition, that volition is not the effect of a cause extrinsic to the mind in which it takes place, it will follow, that there is no cause of it; because it is absolutely impossible, that the mind  
itself



itself should be the cause of it. The impossibility of this has been already stated in the preceding discourse, and more largely illustrated by other writers : And if any man will show the possibility of the mind's causing its own volitions, and will remove the absurdities attending that supposition ; *erit mihi Magnus Apollo* : It will then, and not till then, be incumbent on us to speak of self-determination in a very different strain.

In fine ; those who plead for a self-determining power, either mean what Dr. West declares he means, that we ourselves determine whenever we do determine ; which is no part of the subject of this controversy, is disputed by none and is nothing opposite to moral necessity, extrinsic causality of volition, &c. but amounts to this merely, that we are the subjects of volition : Or they mean, that we are the efficient causes of our own volitions. But these men seem never to have reflected so far on the subject, as to see, that this idea of self-determination runs into what has been so often charged upon them, an infinite series of volitions causing one another : And therefore when this difficulty is suggested to them, they are either silenced and have nothing to answer, or else answer in such a manner as to show, that by efficiently causing our own volitions they mean merely what Dr. West professes to mean, that we *will* or are the subjects of volition, which no more implies, that we cause them, than that we cause all our own perceptions and feelings follows from our being the subjects of them.

“ I take it to be an important truth,” says the Doctor, Part II, p. 19, “ that wherever necessity begins, liberty ends ; and that a necessary agent is a contradiction.” What a pity, that the Doctor should undertake the defence of a proposition, which he is necessitated perpetually to beg ! Or if he be not necessitated to beg it, what a pity that he should do it without necessity ! He knows or ought to have known, that this which he here takes for granted, is not conceded ; that President Edwards and all his followers hold, that  
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the most absolute moral necessity is consistent with perfect liberty, and that an agent acting under moral necessity, is so far from a contradiction, that neither God nor creature is or can be any other agent. If Dr. West should say, that a necessary agent is a contradiction according to *his idea* of agent, *i. e.* a self-determinate agent or one acting by chance: Be it so; he ought to prove, and not assume, that his idea is possible and according to truth.

“When a man considers,” (says Dr. West, p. 23, Part II,) “that he is not moved by any extrinsic cause to do evil, but that his wickedness has originated wholly from himself, he must feel himself exceedingly vile and unworthy of any divine favour.” This is talking altogether in the clouds: What does he mean by wickedness originated from a man’s self? He cannot consistently mean, that “self acts on self and produces wickedness;” for this he rejects as absurd. If he mean, that a man is himself the subject of wickedness, wicked volitions or actions; this is granted; but it is not at all opposed to his being moved by an extrinsic cause to that wickedness, any more than a man’s being the subject of pain is inconsistent with the pain’s being effected by an extrinsic cause. If there be any sense beside these two, in which wickedness can be originated from a man’s self, let it be pointed out.

“If men have an existence distinct from Deity,” says the Doctor, “endowed with a consciousness distinct from Deity, then they have a self-active principle distinct from Deity; *i. e.* they have a self-determining power;” *ibid*, p. 24. That men have an existence and consciousness distinct from Deity, is granted; but that it thence follows, that they have a self-determining power, if by that be meant any thing distinct from a faculty of will influenced by extrinsic motives and causes is not granted, and ought not to have been taken for granted, nor asserted without proof. From the same premises it would follow, that  
brutes



brutes have a self-determining power ; which is not generally allowed by the advocates for that power. For brutes have both an existence and a consciousness distinct from the Deity.

“ He that cannot govern his own mind ; but is constantly determined by an extrinsic cause, is certainly the subject of mere chance and accident ;” *ibid*, p. 28. Indeed ! and is the planetary system the subject of mere chance and accident ? The material world cannot govern itself, yet not an hair of our head escapes the notice or the disposal of our heavenly Father.—Surely the Doctor asserted this without consideration.

“ Our doctrine of self-determination implying, that when the mind acts, it always has an object in view, and that there is always a reason for acting, is as fully consistent with our being the subjects of commands and promises, prohibitions and threatenings, and establishes as sure a connection between means and ends, as he” [President Edwards] “ can suppose to arise from the doctrine of Necessity.” *Ibid*, p. 29. Yet the Doctor’s doctrine is, “ that men are not always governed by the strongest motive,” and that there is no sure connection between motives and action. *Ibid*, p. 6. Now the Doctor is speaking of the means and ends of moral agents and moral actions ; and particularly of commands and promises, prohibitions and threatenings, considered as motives and means of action. And does that doctrine which teaches that there is no sure connection between the strongest motive, or even any motives, whether stronger or weaker, and action, establish as sure a connection between such means and their ends, which are moral actions, as that doctrine which teaches, that there is a sure and infallible connection between such means and their ends ? Is it not surprising, that the Doctor should assert such a thing ?

He tells us, *ibid*, p. 29, “ That he holds no such kind of self-determination, as a power to act without  
“ and



“and against every kind of reason or argument.” But he does hold a power to act without and against the *strongest* reasons and arguments: Therefore he ought much more to hold a power to act without and against the weaker; and consequently a power to act without and against every kind of reason and argument. Nay, the Doctor does expressly hold a power to *resist* all motives, reasons and arguments, and a power to remain *inactive* notwithstanding the sollicitations of them all. And is it not strange, that he who possesses a power to resist and remain inactive, without and against every kind of reason and argument; has not also a power to resist them in acting against them?



## CHAPTER IV.

*Of Motives and their Influence.*

DR. West has given his definition of a motive, p. 17; "It is the occasion, reason, end or design, which an agent has in view, when he acts." And he grants, *ibid*, "that the mind acts upon motives; i. e. when the mind acts or chooses, it always has some end, design or reason, which is the occasion of its acting or choosing. Therefore motives, in our sense of the term, are the previous circumstances, which are necessary for action." And, Part II, p. 93; "Action cannot take place without some object, reason or motive; and the motive or reason for acting must be prior to the action of the mind, and be perceived by it, before it can act." "Nothing can become an object of choice, except it appears to be eligible;" p. 95, Part II. Yet he maintains, "that there is no infallible connection between motive and action;" and that "when motives have done all that they can do, the mind may act or not act." The reason which he assigns for this, is, "that though the mind never acts without some reason or design in acting; yet there is no need of assigning a reason for not acting." P. 17, 18.—If by *acting or not acting* he mean a voluntary acting or not acting, or a choosing or refusing of the motives presented; it is to be observed, as I have already observed, that refusing is as real an action as choosing; and a voluntary not acting is a *voluntary* refusal to act and to comply with the motives proposed, and is as real a volition as any other; and therefore by his own concession, "motive is necessary to it," equally necessary as for any other volition or action.—Or if by *not acting* Dr. West mean no act of either choosing or refusing, but a perfect inaction; then what he says, will come to this, That when motives



tives are proposed, the mind may choose to comply with them, or it may refuse to comply with them, or it may do neither. But the impossibility of this I endeavoured to illustrate in the second chapter, and shall say no more on it at present.

But if it were possible, that on the proposal of motives, the mind should *not act at all*; how would it follow, as Dr. West says, that there is no infallible connection between motive and *action*? It is granted by Dr. West that motive is necessary to every action, whether of choice or refusal; and to say as the Doctor does, that it is not necessary for *not acting*, amounts to this merely, that it is not necessary for involuntary, blockish inaction or torpitude.—By infallible connection we mean no more than constant invariable connection, so that whenever the mind acts, whether in choice or refusal, it is under the persuasive influence of some motive, which, as Dr. West grants, “is the reason and occasion of its acting,” and “a circumstance necessary for action.” We pretend not but that the man, when motives are presented, may possibly fall into a swoon or other state of involuntary stupidity. If this should be the case, it would be nothing to the present purpose. For the question before us is, whether volition be or be not in all cases according to motive in the large sense of President Edwards, including reasons, and external objects, with the taste and bias of the mind. This is what is meant by a determination by motive. Let what will be the cause of involuntary and torpid inaction; so long as it is granted, as Dr. West does grant, that motive is necessary to volition, and that every volition, whether choice or refusal, is occasioned by motive, and never exists without it, every thing is granted on this head, for which we contend.

Dr. West says, “We cannot agree with Mr. Edwards in his assertion, that motive is the *cause* of volition;” p. 17. Mr. Edwards has very particularly informed us in what sense he uses the word *cause*. Thus,



p. 41 ; “ I sometimes use the word cause in this *In-*  
 “ *quiry*, to signify any antecedent either natural or mor-  
 “ al, positive or negative, on which an event, either a  
 “ thing or the manner and circumstance of a thing,  
 “ so depends, that it is the ground and reason, either  
 “ in whole or in part, why it is rather than not ; or  
 “ why it is rather than otherwise. Or in other words,  
 “ any antecedent with which a consequent event is  
 “ so connected, that it truly belongs to the reason  
 “ why the proposition, which affirms that event, is  
 “ true ; whether it has any positive influence or not.”  
 Now, does Dr. West deny, that motive is an antece-  
 dent, on which volition either in whole or part de-  
 pends ? Or that it is a ground or reason, either in  
 whole or part, either by positive influence or not,  
 why it is rather than not ? Surely he cannot with  
 consistence deny this, since he does say, “ By mo-  
 tive we “ understand the *occasion, reason, end or de-*  
 “ *sign*, which an agent has in view, when he acts ;”  
 and that motives are the *previous* “ circumstances,  
 “ which are *necessary* for action ?” Surely a previous  
 circumstance, which is necessary for action or voli-  
 tion, is an “ antecedent on which volition depends ;”  
 and “ a reason which an agent has in view, when he  
 “ acts,” and “ a reason which is the occasion of his  
 “ acting,” “ is a reason either in whole or part, why  
 “ the action is.” So that however desirous Dr. West  
 may be, to be thought to differ, in this point, from  
 President Edwards, it appears, that he most exactly  
 agrees with him. Yet he says, p. 11, “ Mr. Edwards,  
 “ by making motives the *cause* of acts of the will, and  
 “ by declaring, that the existence of the acts of the  
 “ will is the effect of their motives, appears full as un-  
 “ intelligible *to me*, as Chubb could possibly appear  
 “ to him.” But as it appears, that President Edwards  
 has explained himself to mean by *cause* no other than  
*occasion, reason or previous circumstance necessary for*  
*volition* ; and that in this Dr. West entirely agrees  
 with him ; if President Edwards appear absurd to



Dr. West, Dr. West must appear absurd to himself, even as absurd as Chubb could possibly appear to President Edwards.

I do not pretend, that motives are the *efficient* causes of volition. If any expression importing this, have dropped from any defender of the connection between motive and volition; either it must have happened through inadvertence, or he must have meant, that motive is an *efficient cause* in no other sense than rain and the rays of the sun are the efficient cause of the growth of vegetables, or than medicine is the efficient cause of health.

When we assert, that volition is determined by motive, we mean not that motive is the efficient cause of it; but we mean, that there is a stated connection between volition and motive, so that as Dr. West says, "Whenever the mind acts or chooses, it ALWAYS has "some reason" or motive, "which is the *occasion* of "its acting or choosing," and "is a previous circumstance necessary for action" or volition. This amounts to all we mean by an infallible connection between motive and volition; and therefore though Dr. West denies such a connection, he in fact holds it, as much as we do. By infallible connection between motive and volition, we mean, that volition never takes place without some motive, reason or cause of its existence, either in the views of the mind of him, who is the subject of the volition, in the disposition, bias or appetite of his mind or body, or from the influence of some extrinsic agent. In a sense large enough to comprehend all these President Edwards explains himself to use the word *motive*. His words are, "By motive I mean the whole of that which "moves, excites or invites the mind to volition, "whether that be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly;" p. 5. He then proceeds to enumerate several things which operate as motives, viz. the *views* of the mind, the *state, frame and temper*, &c. which the mind may have by nature, or which may have been introduced



introduced by education, example, custom or *other means*.

Dr. West grants an infallible connection between motive and volition ;—1. In that he grants, that motive is *necessary* to volition ;—2. In that he grants, that “ there is *always* a *reason* for the mind’s acting or choosing, and that “ when the mind acts, it “ always has some end, design or *reason*, which is the “ *occasion* of its acting ; and in that he defines *motive* to “ be the *occasion, reason, end* or design, which an agent “ has in view, when he acts.” In these concessions not only does he expressly grant, that whenever there is a volition there is a motive ; but he implicitly grants also, that whenever there is a motive there is a volition. He expressly grants, that motive is the reason of the mind’s acting. But the reason of the mind’s acting is infallibly connected with its acting : Otherwise it is not the reason of its acting. If either the mind should act without the supposed reason ; or if when the supposed reason exists, the action does not follow ; this fact in either case shows plainly, that the supposed reason is not the real reason of the action.—Again, motive is conceded to be the *occasion* of the mind’s acting. But if the motive exist and the action do not follow ; it is plain, that the motive is not the *occasion* of the action.—As motive is allowed to be the *reason* of the action of the mind, it is as absurd, that the motive should exist without the action, as that the reason of an action should exist without the action ; indeed it is the same thing. Let what will be supposed to be the reason of an action, if that supposed reason exist, and the action do not follow, this proves, the supposed reason is falsely supposed to be the reason ; and that either something else is the true reason, or that the action came into existence without reason.—If then motive be, as Dr. West grants, the occasion and reason of action, it is as absurd and contradictory to say, that there is not an infallible connection between action and motive, as that there



is not such a connection between a thing and its cause.

Dr. West argues, that motives cannot be universally the causes of volition, as this would imply, that they are the cause of the divine volitions: But that “ motives cannot be the cause of the divine volitions; “ for this would be to assert, that motives were the “ cause of the first cause.” Now the same reasoning will equally confute Dr. West’s scheme of motives; thus, Motives cannot be necessary occasions of volitions, as this would imply, that they are the necessary occasions of the divine volitions. But to assert this, would be to assert, that motives are the necessary occasions of the first cause.

As volition always implies and supposes a motive; so does a motive as evidently imply and infer a volition. For by the very terms, that is no motive to a man, which does not persuade, move or excite him to volition. This is the sense in which President Edwards uses the word motive. It is not pretended by the most zealous advocate for the influence of motives, that the same objects and reasons will always alike influence a man, and in like manner *move* or *be motives* to him; unless it be supposed, that the state of the mind and every thing relating to it, be the same. The mind of man is from various causes exceedingly changeable, and by no means at all times susceptible of the same impressions from the same intellectual views and from the same biases. The intellectual views may be the same, and the biases may be different; and the biases may be the same and the intellectual views may be different. It will not be denied, that there is an infallible connection between cause and effect: Yet this does not imply, that the same effect always follows from the same cause, unless by the same cause be meant, all the same things and circumstances, which related to the effect, or may have had influence to produce it. And with the like explanation

tion.



tion of the word motive, it is true, that the same motive is always attended with the same volition.

Since then wherever there is a volition, there is a motive, and wherever there is a motive, or, which is Dr. West's explanation of motive, wherever there is the reason and occasion of volition, there is volition, and also since wherever there is the same motive in the sense just now explained, there is the same volition; what is wanting to support the proposition, that there is an infallible connection between motive and volition? A connection just as infallible as that between cause and effect?

Since our volitions are thus entirely limited, bounded and determined *according to motives*; wherein consists the impropriety of saying, that our volitions are determined *by motives*? We mean no more by the latter expression, than we do by the former.

If all our volitions be in this sense determined by motives, in what sense can it be pretended, that they are self-determined; or that we determine and cause our own volitions? And what will become of the whole doctrine of self-determination? It will not be pretended, that we cause all the objects, with which we are surrounded, and which present themselves to us as objects of choice; nor that we cause all our natural biases, tastes and appetites, which are the sources of so many volitions.—If it should be said, that we determine our own motives, determine which motives we will comply with and which we will reject; still as this very determination is the act of the will, a motive is necessary to that. Thus we shall go round in a circle; motive, determining, or (in the language of Dr. West) *being previously necessary* to volition, and volition being necessary to motive.

It seems, that allowing what Dr. West does allow, no man can hold self-determination, in any other sense than one of these two; (1) That we ourselves determine, as we ourselves think, perceive, hear, taste, &c. which is no more than we all allow; and to explain



self-determination thus, is to explain it away and give it up; and, as has been shown, it is thus given up by Dr. West.—(2) That we efficiently cause our own volitions, but invariably according to motives, reasons or preestablished antecedents. This cannot be consistently avowed by Dr. West, both because he maintains, that volition is no effect and has no cause, therefore we cannot be the cause of it; and because to be the efficient causes of our own volitions implies, that “self acts on self and produces volition;” which is expressly renounced by him.

Dr. West, to prove, that there is no infallible connection between motive and volition says, p. 17, 18; “Though it is true, that the mind never acts without some reason or design in acting; yet there is no need of assigning a reason for *not acting*.” By *not acting*, Dr. West means, as observed before, either *refusing* and *voluntary neglect*, or *entire inaction*. If he mean the former, it is a real act of the mind and by his own concession therefore is not “without a reason and design.” If he mean the latter, his argument is just as conclusive to disprove an infallible connection between motive and volition, as the same argument is to disprove the connection between cause and effect: Thus, though it be true, that an effect never comes to pass without a cause; yet there is no need of assigning a cause for *no effect*. It is undoubtedly true, that perfect nihility requires no cause: But no man in his senses would hence infer, that an effect requires no cause, or that there is not an infallible connection between cause and effect. In like manner “there is no need of assigning a reason” or motive for perfect inaction, which is pure nihility. But it cannot be hence inferred, that there is no need of a motive for action, or that there is not an infallible connection between motive and action. Dr. West denies an infallible connection between motive and action, and he endeavours to prove it by making it out that there is no connection between motive and *inaction*: And what



is this to the purpose? How does it hence follow, that there is not an infallible connection between motive and *action*?

Dr. West puts the supposition, that at a gentleman's table he has the offer of tea, coffee or chocolate; that they can all be had with equal ease, and all appear equally eligible to his mind, and that he determines to take coffee. He then adds, p. 18, "I believe, that it is impossible in this and a multitude of similar instances to assign any accident or circumstance, which determines the mind to its choice among things, which appear equally fit and eligible. Consequently here is an undeniable proof of the liberty for which we contend. And this instance will explain my idea, that there is always a reason for acting or choosing: But that there is not always a reason for not acting; and that things may appear eligible to us, and yet not be chosen; *e. g.* I accepted the coffee, because I wanted some refreshment. Coffee appeared to me properly suited to answer my desire. This was a sufficient reason for my receiving coffee. The other two appeared equally eligible. About them I exerted no acts: But this being a *mere negation*, could require no positive reason."—On this I remark,

1. If it were ever so true, that in choosing between things perfectly indifferent, (if any such there be) the mind acts without motive, how would this prove, that it acts without motive in any other case? And the instances of its choosing things perfectly indifferent are so rare, that with respect to the main object of this dispute, they seem hardly worth mentioning. The great object of this dispute is, to investigate that liberty which is necessary to virtue and vice, praise and blame. Dr. West, if I understand him, contends, that an exemption from an infallible connection between motive and volition is essential to that liberty. Or if I do not understand him aright in this instance, he is at liberty to make his choice, whether or not to maintain, that an exemption from such connection be essential



fential to that liberty, without which we cannot practise virtue or vice. If he maintain, that this exemption is essential to that liberty, I ask, Do we exercise virtue or vice in those instances only, in which we choose one of things perfectly indifferent; or does it follow from the supposition, that we act without motive in those instances, in which we do choose one of things perfectly indifferent, that we also act without motive in other instances; viz. in choosing one of things perfectly different, as virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, our eternal happiness and eternal misery? If it be not true, that we exercise virtue or vice in those instances only in which we choose one of things perfectly indifferent; nor that from the supposition, that there are things perfectly indifferent, and that we act without motive when we choose one of such things, it follows that we act without motive in other cases too; what is the great advantage of a power of choosing without motive in such a rare case? And is it worth while to dispute about it? If we exercise moral agency in those instances only, in which we choose one of things perfectly indifferent; our moral agency is confined to very narrow limits indeed, not extending to one of ten thousand of our rational voluntary actions, as, I presume, our opponents themselves will grant. If we exercise moral agency in those instances, in which we choose one of things entirely different, either we are persuaded and influenced by the difference and so are governed by motive, and then the influence of motives is not inconsistent with moral agency or with liberty; or we choose and act without any regard to the difference of the proposed objects: But this must be proved, to obtain credit. If our opponents suppose that it follow from our acting without motive, when (as they say) we choose one of things indifferent, that also we act without motive, when we choose one of things not indifferent; let them show that it does follow. They have not as yet done it.



2. In the passage quoted above, Dr. West considers his choice of coffee, as a real act of his mind arising from a reason or motive; but his neglect or refusal of tea and chocolate as a mere *negation*, which requires no reason or motive. But I appeal to every candid reader, whether a voluntary refusal of any object, be not as real an act of the mind, as a choice. If so, in truth and according to Dr. West's concession, it requires a reason and motive, as much as any other act. I do not mean, that his refusal of tea and chocolate in the case put, is necessarily a distinct act from his choice of coffee: It may be no more a distinct act, than supposing coffee alone had been offered him, and he had accepted it rather than nothing, his acceptance of it and his refusal of nothing had been two entirely distinct acts. The truth is, that his choice of coffee is one complex comparative act, implying a *preference* of coffee to tea and chocolate. I am sensible, that Dr. West holds, "that choice, when used about the determination of the mind respecting the things that appear to us equally eligible, does not include in it the idea of *preference*;" p. 16. But what else is meant by *preference*, than the choosing of one thing rather than another or in the neglect of that other, when both are offered? If Dr. West mean by *preference* any thing different from this, he ought in all reason to inform us what it is. The reason which the Doctor gives, to show that a choice of one of two equally eligible things, is not a preference is, that "they are both considered as equally eligible:" P. 16: *i. e.* they are, (if I may so say) equally *choosable* or equally worthy of choice. And if one cannot be *preferred*, because they are equally worthy of choice; let it be shown, that it is not equally impossible that one of them should be *chosen* when they are equally worthy of choice. If the consideration that they are equally worthy of choice, preclude the possibility of *preference*, why does it not equally preclude the possibility of *election* or *choice*?

Dr.



Dr. West says, that his acceptance of coffee, as it was an act, required a reason; but about tea and chocolate he exerted no act; and this being a mere negation, could require no positive reason. Now if coffee or nothing had been offered him, and he had accepted the coffee, he might as well have said, that his acceptance of coffee, as it was an act, required a reason; but about nothing he exerted no act; and this being a mere negation, could require no positive reason. The truth is, every act of choice is a comparative act, whether one or more things be offered to our choice. When only one thing is offered, the comparison is between that and nothing. When one of several things is offered, the comparison is between those several things. And if we accept the one thing, which alone is offered, we no more refuse or decline the alternative *nothing* or the absence of that one thing, than when we accept one of several things we refuse the rest.

3. If when several things, which Dr. West calls equally eligible, are offered, and a man choose one of them, it be true, that he exerts no act about the rest; the same would hold, though the things were not equally eligible and the things refused were manifestly most eligible: And thus it would be most easy to account for an act of preference of a most inferior object, to a most superior one. It is but saying, that about the last "I exerted no act: And this being a mere negation would require no positive reason." Thus suppose a guinea and a shilling be offered to a beggar: He takes the shilling, but leaves the guinea. May not the beggar account for his conduct in the same way that Dr. West accounts for his, in taking the coffee in the neglect of the tea and the chocolate? He might say, "I accepted the shilling, because I wanted a little money: The shilling appeared properly suited to answer my desire. The guinea appeared equally" and much more "eligible: About that I exerted no act. But this being a mere negation,



“gation, could require no positive reason.” But the question would still remain unanswered, Why did not the beggar exert an act about the guinea, as well as about the shilling, or even in preference to it? Or, which comes to the same, why did he exert an act about the shilling in the neglect of the guinea? Just so, why did Dr. West exert an act about coffee, in the neglect of tea and chocolate? Whatever be the proper answer to the last question, will doubtless as properly answer the former. Nor need Dr. West puzzle himself and his readers about things *equally eligible*. His principles are just as applicable to any other things, and equally prove that there is no connection at all between motive and volition, as that there is not an infallible and universal connection.

4. Dr. West grants, that “when the mind chooses, it always has some *reason*, which is the occasion of its choosing.” Therefore when he chose coffee in the neglect of tea or chocolate, there was some reason for it. But I appeal to the reader, whether according to the Doctor’s own statement of the case, there was any reason why he should choose coffee in the neglect of tea and chocolate, and whether there was not the very same reason why he should have chosen tea or chocolate in the neglect of coffee. He says, they all appeared equally eligible to him. Therefore there was no reason, according to him, why he should choose one, to the neglect of the others.

In his second part as well as in his first the Doctor grants, that “the mind never acts without some reason for acting.” P. 14, and 29. Yet he holds, that of things equally agreeable, it sometimes chooses one and leaves the rest. Now what is the reason of its acting in this case? It is not enough to assign a reason why the mind should take *some one* of several things proposed. As all those things are supposed to be equally eligible, a reason ought to be given why it finally takes one particular one in the neglect of the rest. Unless this be done, no reason is given  
why



why it acts in this manner, in this case ; and therefore for ought that appears, it acts without reason, which is contrary to the Doctor's concession. Therefore let the Doctor either retract his concession, and hold that the mind sometimes acts without any reason ; or renounce the idea, that it sometimes chooses one of several things equally eligible, in the neglect of the rest.

The Doctor says, p. 28, Part II, "When two objects are equally fit, if one is taken and the other left ; the mind had a purpose to answer." We should have been greatly gratified, if the Doctor had pointed out, what purpose the mind had to answer in taking that one which it did take, and in leaving the rest by supposition equally fit to answer the same purpose, for which the one is taken. Until he does point out the purpose, he must excuse us in withholding our assent and denying his proposition.—The Doctor in this repeats what he had said in his first part, that "about that which is not taken the mind exercises no act at all." To this I have already answered, that the mind does exercise an act about it ; that the act of the mind is complex and comparative, having a respect to more objects than one, because more are supposed to be offered and brought into the view of the mind ; that the mind does as really exercise an act about the object left, as if it were ever so inferior or superior to the one taken ; and that the Doctor's reasoning, if it prove any thing, proves too much, viz. that if things ever so unequal be offered and the mind choose the basest and that which is in the lowest degree suited to answer its purpose, it may be still said to have a reason for the action. "But about the other, which is not taken, the mind exercises no act at all — no reason can be assigned for the nonexistence of that which is not."

However, perhaps the Doctor will avow this last observation, though he has not expressly done it as yet : For he "denies, that men are always governed by the strongest motive." P. 6, Part II. To  
avoid



avoid all dispute about words, let it be remembered, that by being *governed* by the strongest motive, is meant no more than that the mind always *follows*, or *coincides with* the strongest motive: And by *strongest* motive President Edwards has explained himself to mean, "that which has the greatest degree of previous tendency to excite choice;" p. 6. Or it is the most *persuasive* motive. Now will Dr. West say, that when several motives are proposed to a man, he sometimes passes by the most persuasive, and follows the least persuasive? If so, what is the reason and what is the motive of its action in this case? He allows, that there is a reason and a motive for every action: Let him point out the reason and the motive in this action.

The Doctor, p. 31, Part II, says, "If the mind never acts without some motive or reason for acting, then it follows, that the motives or reasons for a virtuous conduct, and the reasons and arguments against the practice of iniquity, ought to be set before us in the *strongest* light, to enable us to choose virtue and to avoid vice."—1. Are we then unable to choose virtue and to avoid vice, unless the motives to the former and against the latter, "be set before us in the *strongest* light?" It seems then, that unless those motives be *thus* set before us, we are under no obligation to choose virtue and to avoid vice, because we are not *able* to do it: For it is no part of Dr. West's system, that our duty extends beyond our *ability*. He denies the distinction between natural and moral necessity and inability, and holds, that where necessity or inability begins, liberty and moral agency end. Part II, p. 19.—2. Of what advantage can it be "to set the motives to virtue and against vice in the *strongest* light," if there be no connection between the *strongest* motives, and volition? Surely none at all. It is therefore implied in the passage just quoted, as in many other passages in Dr. West's book, that there is a connection between such motives and volition, and that such connection is not inconsistent with liberty.



ty. Yet as the Doctor "denies, that we are always governed by the *strongest motives*," he must hold, that there is no *sure* connection between the strongest motive and volition. Then the question arises, What degree of connection between the strongest motive and volition does he grant to exist and to be consistent with liberty? If the highest degree of probability, reaching to the step next to certainty, be allowed in the case, what should render the only remaining step so baleful to liberty, as to be inconsistent with it? Or if it be allowed, that the probability, according to the degree of it, does indeed diminish liberty; then it diminishes moral agency too; and therefore such a representation of the motives to virtue, as "sets them in the strongest light," and makes it more or less probable, that they will influence to a certain conduct, has in reality no tendency to persuade to a *virtuous* conduct; because just so far as it has a tendency to lead to any particular conduct, it destroys moral agency and precludes the possibility of *virtue*. And such a representation is so far from "enabling us to choose virtue," that so far as it has any effect on us, it renders it impossible that we should choose it *morally*; and any other than a *moral* choice of virtue, if other there be, is no subject of exhortation.

The Doctor asserts, "that there is not an infallible connection between motives and volition;" p. 80, Part II. And in the same page, "That the infallible connection between motives and volition cannot take place, till the mind has determined to examine the several motives or reasons for acting in any particular manner, in order that it may adopt the best. In that case the mind will *certainly* choose that which appears the best." Indeed! This is coming down wonderfully: This is acknowledging an infallible connection between motive and volition in all cases, in which the mind *examines the several motives or reasons for acting*: It is also acknowledging, that in every such case the mind is governed by the *strongest*



est motive, as "it will *certainly* choose that which *ap-  
pears to be the best.*" Of course there is an infalli-  
ble connection between motives and volition in all  
cases, except those in which the mind acts abruptly  
and without due consideration. And is it indeed  
true, that when the mind acts abruptly, it does not  
choose that which *appears* to be best, but that which  
at the time appears to be worst, or at least less good  
and eligible, than something else, at the same time in  
view of the mind? When men act abruptly and with-  
out due consideration, no wonder if they be misled  
by mere appearance, which is not always well found-  
ed. But do they in such a case, act without regard  
to any appearance well or ill founded, and even con-  
trary to the greatest appearance of good? That this is  
generally fact, needs to be confirmed by something  
stronger, than mere assertion or implication.

Dr. West, throughout his books in general opposes  
the infallible connection between motive and volition,  
as inconsistent with liberty and moral agency: But in  
the passage on which I am now remarking, grants  
such a connection whenever "the mind" acts with  
proper deliberation, and "examines the several mo-  
tives and reasons for acting in a particular manner."  
It seems then, that on Dr. West's plan, whenever the  
mind acts with proper deliberation, it is under such  
an infallible necessity of so acting, as is inconsistent  
with liberty and moral agency, and consequently must  
be destitute of liberty and moral agency; and that it  
possesses liberty and moral agency then only, when it  
acts abruptly and without proper deliberation. Will  
the Doctor avow this consequence? Or if he should  
say, that although when "the mind has examined the  
motives and reasons, it will *certainly* choose that  
which appears to be the best," and there is an infalli-  
ble connection in the case; yet that connection is not  
inconsistent with liberty and moral agency; why does  
he dispute against that connection at all? If it do not  
infringe



infringe liberty and moral agency, why is it so violently opposed?

The Doctor, in p. 85, Part II, quotes these lines from President Edwards; "I suppose none will deny, that it is possible for motives to be set before the mind so powerful ——— as to be invincible;" and then he remarks on them, "If he means, that *arguments* may be placed before the understanding in so strong a light, as to become invincible, and such as the mind cannot but yield to, it is readily granted, and is nothing to the purpose: For the understanding is not the active, but the perceptive faculty of the mind; and liberty is placed in the will, which is the only active faculty of the mind. But if the meaning is, that motives may be so strong, as *necessarily to determine the will*, this is denied to be possible, while the mind has the free exercise of *reason*. But when the mind is so violently agitated, as to lose the free exercise of reason, as in the case of running in a fright ——— liberty is destroyed.—— Things that are not eligible in themselves nor in their consequences, cannot become objects of choice; which is to say, there can be no motive to choose them, though we may find it difficult, and in some cases impracticable to bring our propensities to submit to our choice. When one is convinced, that he has contracted a wrong habit, he finds no difficulty in *choosing* to overcome that habit; but he will have a vast deal of difficulty in his endeavours to overcome it, because in every unguarded hour, he will be liable to be led astray by his evil habit. And therefore such a person may say with the Apostle, *To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do*. Here we see, that we may have a power to choose, when we find it extremely difficult and in some cases impossible to do the things which we  
 " have



“ have chosen. This shows the *absolute necessity* of  
 “ divine grace to *strengthen* us to do our duty.”

On this remarkable passage, I beg leave to observe,

1. That Dr. West, according to his own principles, cannot consistently maintain, that “ when the mind  
 “ loses the free exercise of *reason* its *liberty* is destroy-  
 “ ed.” For *reason* belongs to “ the understanding,  
 “ the perceptive faculty,” and not “ to the will, the  
 “ only active faculty ;” but “ liberty is placed in the  
 “ will.” Therefore according to him liberty is not  
 affected by what takes place in the understanding, as  
 the free exercise of *reason* does. On this ground it is,  
 that he pleads, that those arguments which are invin-  
 cible to the understanding, are nothing to the purpose  
 as to the question concerning liberty, which is placed  
 in the will. The ground of the argument manifestly  
 is, that there is no certain connection between the un-  
 derstanding and the will ; and therefore that which  
 overbears the understanding, does not at all, on that  
 account, affect the will. Therefore that fear, which  
 overbears reason, does not on that account affect the  
 will or liberty. Otherwise if that fear which overbears  
 reason and the right exercise of the understanding, do  
 on that account affect and destroy liberty ; why do  
 not those arguments, which are invincible to the un-  
 derstanding and overbear it, also affect and destroy  
 liberty ; which is denied by Dr. West.

2. In this passage, Dr. West, however inconsistently  
 with himself, holds, that motives necessarily determine  
 the will. In the first place he declares, that it is im-  
 possible, that motives should be so strong as necessa-  
 rily to determine the will, while reason remains. Yet  
 in the same passage he asserts, that “ when once we  
 “ are convinced, that things are for our greatest good,  
 “ we can easily choose them,” and “ things that are  
 “ not eligible in themselves nor in their consequences,”  
 and of course things that we do not “ *perceive*” to be  
 in either of these respects eligible, “ cannot become  
 “ objects of choice.” In p. 93, Part II, the Doctor

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says,



says, "The object, *motive* or *reason* for acting must be " prior to the action of the mind and *perceived* by it, " before it can act." " Nothing *can* become an object, except it appears to be eligible." Ibid, p. 95. " There *must appear* some fitness or pleasingness to the " mind, antecedent to its choice." Ibid. Nothing then can be an object of choice or be chosen, which is not and does not *appear* to be *eligible, fit* and *pleasing*. Now all objects of choice are of two kinds, positive or negative, the possession or absence of the things proposed for choice. And things which do not on the whole appear to be eligible, cannot be chosen; then the absence of them being proposed for choice, is of course chosen, and must be chosen, because it must appear eligible. The possession and the want, the presence and the absence, of the same things cannot, upon the whole, be at the same time eligible: This would imply a contradiction.—To refuse an object is to choose the absence or want of it. Therefore to refuse those things which appear to be eligible is impossible: Of course such things must be chosen; there is a necessity of it, otherwise that would be chosen, which does not appear to be eligible, which Dr. West declares to be impossible.

The same thing may be more briefly and perhaps more clearly expressed thus; Dr. West grants that nothing can be chosen which does not appear to be eligible. Therefore the absence of that which appears eligible cannot be chosen, because that cannot on the whole appear eligible while the presence and possession of the object appears eligible: And as the absence of the object cannot be chosen, or, which is the same thing, the object cannot be refused; of consequence it must be chosen; and so there is an infallible connection between motive and volition, and motives necessarily determine the will.

If to this it should be answered, that though those things, which are not seen to be eligible, cannot become objects of choice, and therefore we cannot refuse



or choose the absence of those things which we perceive to be eligible ; yet we may not act at all with respect to them ; and may neither choose nor refuse them ; I reply, as I have said before, that is an impossibility ; there is no medium with respect to any thing offered as an object of choice, between choosing and refusing ; neither to choose nor refuse in such a case is to be blockishly insensible. Or if it be said, that we only consider and deliberate on the offer ; still we *choose* to deliberate.

3. According to this passage, a man can never choose vice or sin. For surely they are neither eligible in themselves, nor in their consequences, and therefore according to this passage, “ cannot become “ objects of choice,” *i. e.* cannot be chosen. But will Dr. West abide by this ? Or if to avoid this consequence, the Dr. should say, that his meaning is, that a thing which is not *seen* or *viewed*, as eligible in either of those respects, cannot be chosen ; I answer, this implies, that the will in all its acts complies with the dictates of the understanding, and is necessarily determined by motive, as I have just now endeavoured to illustrate ; nor, as I can conceive, is there any way to avoid this consequence, but by recurring to what is denied to be possible, a supposed power of the mind, to act or not act at all, and to be perfectly torpid, in view of whatever motives. To take this for granted is a prostrate begging of the question.

5. As this passage holds forth, that the human mind always acts upon motive and cannot act without it, and therefore as is illustrated in a preceding paragraph, is always determined by motive ; so it follows, that it is always determined by the *strongest* motive, that which appears the most eligible, or has the greatest previous tendency to induce volition. Surely there can be no motive or reason to act on a weaker motive in preference to a stronger : This can never appear eligible ; and Dr. West holds, that the mind never acts without some reason or motive ; without the appearance of something as eligible.



6. As the will is the only active faculty, and the seat of liberty and moral agency, so there is no morality in any other faculty, actions or impressions, than those of the will; and Dr. West supposes in this very passage, as well as elsewhere, that our propensities and habits do not belong to will. Therefore, provided we *choose* things, which are for our greatest good, it is of no consequence, as to morality, whether or not “we find it difficult and impracticable to bring our propensities to submit to our choice;” of no more consequence, than whether we can bring our understandings to be as acute and comprehensive, as we may choose. And though we have contracted a wrong habit, if we “choose to overcome it,” it is of no more consequence in a moral view, that we find “a vast deal of difficulty in our endeavours to overcome it;” or that we are “liable to be seduced and led astray by it;” than that we find a vast deal of difficulty in our endeavours to overcome our ignorance of astronomy, and then that we are liable to be led astray by false guides and false witnesses. For so long as our will and choice are right, all in which there is liberty and moral agency, is right, and so long we cannot possibly be led astray from our duty. And if our wrong propensities and habits, under these circumstances be not subdued, it will imply no fault in us, provided, as is supposed by Dr. West, those propensities and habits consist not in the active or moral faculty or depend not on it: For on this supposition they are not of a moral nature and imply nothing morally wrong.

7. Nor is it true, as Dr. West here asserts, that though we easily choose that which is good, we stand “in *absolute necessity* of divine grace, to strengthen us to our duty.” So far as we choose that which is good, our wills are right, and our moral part is right. So far therefore we actually do our duty, and have no necessity of divine grace to strengthen us, to do that which we have done already. Does the Doctor suppose,



pose, that our duty calls us beyond our strength? And that it obliges us to act against *absolute necessity*. ?

8. Nor if we were to be assisted by divine power to perform any thing beyond the reach of our moral faculties, would there be any *grace* in such assistance. It is *grace* to enable a man to perform his duty; but it is no *grace*, to enable him to perform that which is not his duty; e. g. to fly to the moon.

The Doctor supposes, that President Edwards held, that there is always *a reason for not acting*. No doubt there is always a reason for the mind's refusing an object offered. But President Edwards never held, that the mind ever sinks itself into perfect inaction and torpor; and of course he did not hold, that there is a reason for this.

The Doctor insists, that "The mind determines upon motives, and is not properly determined by motives;" p. 87. This seems to be a mere dispute about words. The Doctor might as well have said, that vegetables grow upon, or in consequence of the rain, and not by the rain. And would it be worth while to dispute that matter with him?

"Strange so much difference there should be

"'Twixt *tweedle-dum* and *tweedle-dee*."

It is considered by the compilers of the *Encyclopædia* lately printed at Philadelphia, as an invincible argument against the infallible connection between motive and volition, that if equal motives were set before a man to travel an eastern road and to travel a southern road, he would, on the supposition of such a connection, travel in a diagonal line, to the southeast. But this is contrary to fact and experience. Therefore they conclude, there is no sure connection between motive and action. They might just as conclusively have proved, that there is no infallible connection between evidence and the opinions of men. Thus, on the supposition that the arguments, that the world was created in the spring and that it was created in autumn, balance each other, the conclusion



must be, that it was created in neither of those seasons, but midway between them. If the arguments, that Dr. West wrote the Essays on liberty and necessity, and that some other person wrote them, should be equal; we ought to believe that neither of them wrote them; but a middle man between them.

Dr. West, in his second part, insists more largely on the subject of choosing between things equally eligible, than in his first part; and puts the case of four equal lines, one of which is to be touched; and he supposes that he determines to touch one of them, and this determination he supposes to be without motive and without extrinsic cause. Now in any such case there appears to be no more difficulty in accounting for my determination to take or choose one in particular, than there is in accounting for my seeing or thinking of one in particular. Though our thoughts roam freely and apparently without control, yet Dr. West will not pretend, that they happen by mere chance and without a cause. Just so as to our volitions; they no more happen in any case without a cause, than any other events. Nor can the mind itself, in which they take place, be the efficient cause of them, without running into an infinite series of volitions, and implying volition before the first volition.—Therefore let the Doctor bring as many instances as he pleases, of things apparently indifferent, so long as choice among them has a cause, and a cause extrinsic to the mind too; they make nothing to his purpose. I ask Dr. West, Is his determination to touch one of his equal lines, which he calls C, an uncaused event? He will not pretend it. Is it efficiently caused by the mind itself, in any other sense, than as the mind is the subject of it, or as it is the cause of all its own thoughts and feelings? To answer in the affirmative, and not to clear the answer of the absurdities and impossibility charged upon it, is mere dogmatizing.—To all instances, in which creatures are supposed to choose one of several indifferent things,  
my



my answer is, that though we cannot point out the particular motive or accident, which is the occasion of the choice of that particular one; still this choice has a cause, and a cause extrinsic to the mind too, and it is as easy to account for our choosing one of several indifferent things, as to account for our thinking of one of them in particular.

But perhaps the Doctor meant to evade this, by saying, that in the very act of determining to touch one of his equal lines, viz. C, he "voluntarily called it to mind." What does the Doctor mean by this? That he first wished to think of C, and that in consequence of this wish, it came to his mind? If he did mean this, it is to be presumed, that he will not undertake to defend it. And as I can imagine no other meaning of "voluntarily calling C to mind," I must be excused from further answer until I am better informed. If the Doctor mean, that he wished to think of one of his lines, and then C came to his mind; the question returns, What made C come to his mind?

But the Doctor argues, that the *Creator* has a self-determining power, and that he does or may exert that power in creating two or more perfectly similar bodies and in placing them in different situations, or in causing one of them to move, while the other is at rest, &c. As to all such cases I observe,

1. That every determination of God is as eternal, as unchangeable and necessary, as his existence is, and therefore none of his acts are any more self-determined, than his existence. To suppose otherwise is to suppose that the Deity is mutable. If therefore he have determined to create ever so many bodies perfectly alike, and to dispose of them in different circumstances, this is no proof of self-determination in the Deity, if by that term be meant any thing opposite to the most absolute and irreversibile moral necessity: I say *moral* necessity, because all necessity of moral acts, is moral necessity.



2. If God have created two bodies perfectly alike, and placed them in different situations; it will not follow, that he has done it without wise design and motive.

3. But why did he not place them in a reverse of situations, that which is on the right hand, on the left, and that which is on the left hand, on the right? And so with respect to rest and motion.—The answer has been long since given by President Edwards: These bodies, though said to be numerically different, are no more different than the same sound repeated at different times. These sounds are as numerically different as the bodies, and with the same reason it may be asked, why was not the first sound made last and the last first? Or why were not these numerically different sounds interchanged? The absurdity of putting this question must appear to every one, because it implies, contrary to the very supposition, that the sounds are different in some other respect than time. So the question, why the two perfectly alike bodies were not interchanged in their situation, implies, contrary to the supposition, that those bodies differ in some other respect beside their situation.

The Doctor suggests several considerations to show, that these bodies do differ in some other respect beside their situation; as that one of them may be in motion, the other at rest. And what is motion but a change of situation? So the same sound may move from one place to another; yet no body would conclude from that merely, that it was a different sound from a perfectly similar sound, *i. e.* different from a repetition of the same sound in a different place or at a different time.—Also the Doctor insists, that those similar bodies are *numerically* different; that is, they differ in number, so that you may number them, and if you please, may call that on the right hand No. 1 or A, and that on the left hand No. 2 or B. And in the same manner you may number the sounds; and you may as well ask why sound No. 2, was not  
made



made first, as why No. 2 of the bodies was not placed on the left hand. If two bodies be different numerically only, they differ in no other respect, than in situation; for if they did not differ in situation, they would become one body.

The Doctor proceeds, p. 15, "That they [the bodies] are numerically different from each other, appears from this consideration, that if the globe A, on the right hand, should be removed to a far distant place, the Deity could create another just like it, and put it in the same place from which A was removed." So if sound A should be removed from the place in which it was first made to a far distant place, the Deity could cause another sound just like it, in the same place, from which A had been removed.—P. 16. "It is evident, that these two globes are as really two, as though they were ever so dissimilar." This is no more evident, than that the two sounds are as really two, as though they had been ever so dissimilar.—Ibid. "And they were made to answer different purposes; and yet being perfectly similar, A could have answered the purposes of B and B of A." So the sound A may have been made to relieve Saul troubled by an evil spirit; and the sound B may have been made to answer the purpose of the temple worship. Yet being perfectly similar and indeed no more than the repetition of the same sound, A could have answered the purpose of B, and B of A.

Dr. West says, that President Edwards, in supposing that two globes perfectly alike, are the same in every respect except their situation, has confounded similarity with identity; p. 16, Part II. President Edwards does indeed suppose, that two globes perfectly alike in all respects except their situation, are the same in all respects except their situation; and if they could be alike in their situation too, as they then would be in the same place, no doubt Dr. West will grant, that in that case they would become one and the same globe:



globe : If not let him point out in what respect they would not be the same.

The Doctor dwells long on the case of the two globes, and yet every thing that he says to make out, that they are two in any respect beside place, may be said to make out, that perfectly similar sounds given in different times or places, are not the same sound repeated. What he says, p. 16, may be applied to the case of the sounds thus ; “ What superiour fitness has” the sound A, to the sound B, “ that makes it necessary, that it should be” given first and be continued in one place ? “ Or what superiour fitness has” the sound B to the sound A, “ that makes it necessary, “ that it should be” given in the second place in point of time, and should be moved to another place in point of situation ? “ It is certain no reason can be “ assigned : For they being perfectly similar, one “ cannot in the nature of things be more fit than the “ other. So then, here are two very different effects “ of the divine power, without any possible reason” why sound A should not be given in the second place and be moved, and sound B, in the first place and not be moved.

The Doctor conceives, p. 17, that the ideas advanced imply, “ that one and the same body may be “ in two different places at the same time.” No doubt they do imply, that a body which is in all respects one and the same with another body, except situation, may be in a different place from that other body at the same time ; and may be the subject of effects different and contrary to those, of which that other body may at the same time be the subject.

All that the Doctor says on this subject, implies, that a body different from another numerically only, differs from it in some other respect beside situation. But he will doubtless perceive, that this is an error, if he reflect, that provided the diversity of situation were removed and they were at the same time in the same place, they would no longer be numerically different.



ent.—Yet Dr. West says, p. 17, “ If they differed  
 “ only in place, then put A in the place of B, and it  
 “ would become B ; and B, by changing with A,  
 “ would become A ; which is not the case : For  
 “ should we see A and B change places, still we should  
 “ call each by the same name we did before.” If  
 you put A in the place of B, it would become B, in  
 the same and no other sense, than if you make the  
 sound A, in the place and time of the sound B, it will  
 become B. If we should see those two bodies change  
 their places with each other, still they would be all  
 the while in different places, as much so as two sounds  
 would be, if we should hear the sound, which is now  
 in this apartment, gradually move to another place,  
 and the perfectly similar sound, which is now made in  
 the adjoining apartment, gradually move into this  
 apartment. Those sounds being all the while thus  
 different in place, do not become in all respects one  
 sound ; the difference of place still remains : And is  
 all the difference of the bodies supposed to be seen  
 to interchange places.—And if the globes should  
 be annihilated and then be created anew, and that  
 which is now on the right hand should be created on  
 the left, and *vice versa* ; this would be as absurd a  
 supposition, as to suppose, that if the two perfectly  
 similar sounds now existing in this apartment and in  
 the adjoining apartment, should cease ; that which is  
 now in the adjoining apartment could be renewed in  
 this apartment, and that which now exists in this a-  
 partment could be renewed in the adjoining, in the  
 stead of the one which is now there. Every one  
 must see, that this implies, that the sounds are differ-  
 ent from each other, in some other respect, than their  
 place ; which is contrary to the supposition.

The Doctor proceeds, *ibid*, “ If one of the globes  
 “ should be dashed in pieces, it would not in the least  
 “ affect the other, but it would be as whole as it was  
 “ before.” So if one of the perfectly similar sounds  
 made in different places, though at first entirely me-  
 lodious,



ludicrous, should become harsh and grate on the ear, it would not in the least affect the other. Yet Dr. West grants, that these before the alteration of one, are only the repetition of the same sound.

The Doctor continues, "If the two globes were  
 " one and the same in every respect, except their oc-  
 " cupying two places at the same time, then whatever  
 " accident should take place with respect to one,  
 " would equally take place with respect to the other:  
 " That is, if A be dashed in pieces, B must share the  
 " same fate; which we see is not the case." This is  
 said without proof or reason given for its support,  
 and therefore a bare denial is a sufficient answer. If  
 two sounds in every other respect one and the same,  
 should be made in two places, whatever accident  
 should take place with respect to one, might not in  
 the least affect the other.

The sum of my answer concerning the two globes,  
 is, That they are no more two, than two perfectly sim-  
 ilar sounds made in different places or times; that  
 the supposition of their being interchanged, is as ab-  
 surd as the supposition, that the two sounds should be  
 interchanged; that it implies, contrary to what is sup-  
 posed, that they are different from each other, in  
 some other respect beside situation; and finally, that  
 it is no more in the power of the Deity to interchange  
 them, than to interchange the two sounds.—If Dr.  
 West should reply to this, as he often has done in  
 other cases, that "this is past his power to conceive:"  
 Be it so; what follows? That therefore it cannot be  
 true? And is Dr. West's skill to conceive the stand-  
 ard of truth?

"To say, that no two things can have equal de-  
 " grees of eligibility and fitness in the divine mind, is  
 " to confound the reason of acting, with action itself;  
 " and to make the Deity a mere passive being, or a  
 " mechanical medium of fate." Part II, p. 19.—  
 The Doctor has not told how this confounds the rea-  
 son of acting with action, and he must not expect,  
 that



that all his readers will receive it upon his mere assertion. It is to be presumed, that many of them will still believe, that the divine mind always acts according to the dictates of wisdom, and on account of superiour fitness chooses whatever it does choose, and that this is not to confound the reason of acting with action, but to preserve them distinct.—If for the Deity to act always voluntarily according to the dictates of perfect wisdom, be what the Doctor means by his being “a mere passive being,” we grant it; but we appeal to the reader, whether the Doctor be not in this case guilty of a perversion of language; or at least whether he be not guilty of begging the question, in supposing, that there is no action but that which is self-determinate; as that is manifestly supposed in the proposition now under consideration.—As to “the mechanical medium of fate,” the reader will say, whether it be not *mere rant*, unworthy of a grave philosopher and divine.

Dr. West frequently says, and every where takes it for granted, that in the divine mind there may be innumerable things, which differ in many respects, which yet may have equal degrees of eligibility and fitness to answer God’s particular purposes; and among these innumerable things the Deity can choose one and not another, and, with respect to any of them can act or not act.—That things thus different may be equally fit to answer the purposes of God is not granted and ought not to have been asserted without proof or instance. It appears to be a mere conjecture; and if mere conjectures be admitted as truth, truth is the most uncertain thing in the world. Besides, it is very improbable, that things differing in several respects, should be equally adapted to the same purpose. As to the idea that God can in any case act or *not act*, this appears to be an impossibility, for the reasons already mentioned.

“If a man is led by any means or motives or reasons, to choose that which he formerly abhorred,” says the Doctor,



Doctor, "and to abhor that which he formerly loved,  
 " *he is still as free as ever he was* ; for nothing being  
 " an object of choice, but what appears eligible, it is  
 " impossible that the mind should choose that which  
 " is neither eligible in itself, nor in its consequences ; *i. e.*  
 " nothing is an object of choice but eligible things.  
 " When then things appear to us eligible, which former-  
 " ly we abhorred, and we abhor things, that formerly  
 " were eligible, we have only changed the objects of  
 " our choice, but not our freedom : We are as free  
 " now, as we were before." Part II, p. 30. The  
 truth so naturally obtrudes itself on every man, that it  
 is difficult for him consistently to contradict it.\* The  
 Doctor here grants, that when a man chooses an ob-  
 ject, by " whatever means, motives or reasons he is  
 " led to the choice," " he is still free." Therefore to  
 be led by motives in any case is not inconsistent with  
 freedom ; therefore to be led by them *always*, in an  
*established and infallible connection* between motives  
 and choice, is not inconsistent with freedom. Why  
 then does he dispute President Edwards for holding  
 such a connection?—Besides, Dr. West here grants,  
 that if a man be led *by any means* to choose an object,  
 still he is *free*. Then he is free, when he is led to  
 choose an object, by *an extrinsic cause*. Nay, he is  
 free, when he is led by *a divine influence*, to choose  
 an object. It is further to be observed, that in this  
 passage, Dr. West declares, that it is *impossible*, that  
 the mind should choose any thing, which does *not ap-  
 pear to it eligible*. What then becomes of self-deter-  
 mination ? Has the mind a power to make things ap-  
 pear agreeable or disagreeable at pleasure ; to control  
 all its own views, and to create its own happiness in  
 any circumstances whatever ? This indeed is the thor-  
 ough scheme of self-determination advocated by Arch-  
 bishop King, but which has been since given up,  
 though inconsistently, by Dr. Clarke, and so far as I  
 know, by all other believers in self-determination ; and

\* *Naturam expelles furea, tamen usque recurret*, Hor. Ep. I, 19.



to be sure cannot be consistently adopted by Dr. West for many reasons ; particularly this, that Dr. West holds that the will always follows motive ; but this scheme is, that the will always goes before motive.

“ Mr. Edwards and his followers,” says Dr. West, “ suppose, that there must be a particular reason why every determination of mind ——— is in this particular manner, rather than any other ——— which will imply, that there can be no two objects in the mind ——— equally eligible.——The contrary we know to be true by OUR own experience.” Part II, p. 14. How does Dr. West know what OUR own experience is ? He may indeed claim a right to know HIS own experience ; but I defy him to tell what my experience, or the experience of any other man, is, unless he have had information. Who then gave him a right to speak in the *plural* number in this case ? And whom does he mean, when he speaks of OUR experience ? If he mean mankind in general, I call on him for proof, and wish he had been a little more reserved in this instance. Strong assertions are equally open to all ; and if they be good arguments, it is easy to prove, that the experience of mankind is directly the reverse of what Dr. West asserts it to be.

As to the question, whether any two objects are, at the instant of the choice of one of them, equally eligible in the view of the mind ; I answer it in the negative ; and in my own experience never found them to appear any more equally eligible, than any two objects, to be equally the objects of my sight or of the attention of my mind. And as to the various instances of several eggs, guineas and spots on a chess board, one of which is proposed to be taken or touched ; there is no more difficulty, as I have said already, in assigning a reason, why one of them rather than any other, is taken or touched, than why one rather than any other, is more particularly seen or attended to, by the eye or the mind. The circumstance, that one of them is more directly and particularly seen or attended



attended to, is a sufficient reason, why that rather than any of the rest should be taken or touched : And when this circumstance takes place with regard to any one of several guineas for instance, they are not all, or do not appear, equally eligible. That which is the immediate object of sight or attention is, for that reason, most eligible : And how that came to be more particularly the object of sight or attention, I am under no more obligation to account, than Dr. West or any other man.

It is a sentiment entertained by some, that we efficiently cause our own volitions, but invariably according to motives, reasons or preestablished antecedents. Dr. Clarke expresses this in various parts of his metaphysical works ; as in the following, “ The  
 “ true, proper, immediate, physical cause of action, is  
 “ the power of self-motion in men, which exerts itself  
 “ *freely* in consequence of the last judgment of the un-  
 “ derstanding. But the last judgment of the understand-  
 “ ing is not itself a physical efficient, but merely a *moral*  
 “ *motive upon which* the physical efficient, or motive pow-  
 “ er begins to act.” *Being and Attributes*, p. 93. “ The  
 “ experience of a man’s ever doing what he judges rea-  
 “ sonable to do, is not at all an experience of his being  
 “ under any *necessity* so to do. For *concomitancy* in  
 “ this case is no evidence at all of physical connec-  
 “ tion. Upon supposition of *perfect liberty*, a reason-  
 “ able being would *still constantly* do what *appeared*  
 “ *reasonable* it should do : And its *constantly* doing so,  
 “ is no proof at all of its wanting liberty or a physical  
 “ power of doing otherwise.” *Remarks on Collins*, p.  
 25.—Dr. Price entirely agrees in this sentiment  
 with Dr. Clarke. “ A self-determining power, which  
 “ is *under no influence of motives* ——— has never  
 “ been contended for or meant by any advocates for  
 “ liberty.—Every being who acts at all, must act  
 “ for some *end* and with some *view*.” *Correspondence*  
*with Priestly*, p. 156. “ The *influence of motives* is  
 “ perfectly



“ perfectly consistent with liberty and indeed supposes  
 “ it.” *Reid on the Active Powers*, p. 275.

On these passages I remark;

1. Dr. Clarke, as well as the other advocates for self-determination, abundantly contradicts these sentiments. Thus in his second letter to the gentleman at *Cambridge*, speaking of the final perception of the understanding and first operation of the active faculty, he says, “ I think there is no connection at all between them ; and that in their not being connected lies the difference between action and passion, which difference is essential to liberty.” — But if a man “ on the supposition of perfect liberty,” “ constantly do what appears reasonable ;” then a man may in a consistence with perfect liberty constantly act agreeably to the final perception of his understanding ; *i. e.* the final perception of the understanding and action, or “ the operation of the active faculty,” may be constantly connected consistently with liberty. And is constant connection, no connection at all? And if in their not being connected lies the essence of liberty, the essence of liberty cannot be consistent with their constant connection.

2. That Dr. Clarke places liberty in a *physical power* to do an action. His words are, “ A being’s “ constantly doing what appears reasonable it should “ do, is no proof of its wanting liberty or a physical “ power of doing otherwise.” He evidently uses *liberty* and *physical power*, as synonymous expressions. Many other passages might be quoted from Dr. Clarke, Dr. Price, and other principal authors of that class, in which they expressly assert or evidently suppose, that whoever has a *physical power* to do an action, is free ; and that the reason why motives are not inconsistent with liberty, is, that they infer not a physical necessity or inability. But this is no more than we all grant. Peter had the same physical or natural power to confess his Lord, which he had to deny him ; and Judas, the same physical power to be faithful to him, as to betray



betray him. Nor do the most absolute decrees and predictions destroy this physical power. So that absolute decrees and predictions are, on this plan, perfectly consistent with liberty.

3. These passages imply, that though the mind is the efficient cause of its own volitions; yet this efficiency is limited to exert itself or to be exerted, according to motives and the dictates of the understanding. But this, on the plan of those who deny that volition can be free and yet be the effect of an extrinsic cause, is no more liberty than the slave exercises, who moves and acts at the control of his master; or than the man has, who walks in a prison and whose liberty is bounded and determined by the walls and gates of the prison, and by the consent of the gaoler. We might as well say, that a slave is in possession of his liberty and is not controlled by the will of his master, but controls himself according to the will of his master; as that we are free with the liberty of self-determination and contingence, and yet be always limited to determine ourselves according to the influence of motives. If there be a real connection between motive and volition, that connection is as inconsistent with liberty as if motives were the efficient causes of volition; provided liberty mean contingence or previous uncertainty of action: And if liberty mean self-causation of volition, and this self-causation be under the control of motives or any extrinsic cause, still where is liberty in the sense contended for by our opponents? Volition in this case is equally limited and controlled, as if it were efficiently produced by motive.

Such self-determination as this, is not at all inconsistent with efficacious grace, absolute decrees, and the most firm preestablishment of all events and volitions. If self-determination exert itself according to motives only, let God in his providence bring the proper motives into view, and we are efficaciously determined, or if you please, it is efficaciously brought



to pass, that we shall determine ourselves in a particular limited manner; and let God decree absolutely that those motives shall come into view, and he absolutely decrees and foreordains what our conduct shall be. So that this kind of self-determination does not at all answer the purpose of avoiding the dreadful doctrine of absolute decrees, the fatality implied in that doctrine, or other doctrines connected with it.

4. If a man cause his own volitions according to motives only, and this be a universal rule; doubtless this rule was established by some cause. This rule is an establishment; this establishment is an effect, and requires a cause as much as any other effect. Who or what is that cause? It is doubtless either the First Cause, or some subordinate cause appointed by him. In either case the original cause of this establishment, by which intelligent creatures cause their own volitions according to motives, is God. Also he in the course of his providence brings all those motives into our view, on which we act. And doubtless both this establishment and the coming of the motives into our view were caused by him, in consequence of a previous determination to cause them. Therefore this scheme of self-determination not only is consistent with absolute decrees and the efficacious providence of God; but it necessarily implies both these. It necessarily implies, that God has decreed all our volitions and is either mediately or immediately the cause of them all. Therefore it is inconsistent, that those who espouse this scheme of liberty and self-determination according to motives, should oppose the doctrines of God's absolute decrees and efficacious grace.

5. Beside this, the common absurdity of self-determination equally attends this scheme of determining ourselves according to motives; I mean the absurdity of an infinite series of volitions causing one another. If all free volitions be caused by the subject, that volition in which a man complies with a motive, must have been caused by himself and by a preceding vo-



tion; and this last volition, for the same reason, must have been caused by one preceding that, and so on infinitely.

6. Nor is this all. The doctrine now under consideration is, that every volition is according to a motive, and is under the persuasive influence of it. Therefore every one of that infinite series of volitions must have been put forth in the view of some motive. So that here we have not only an infinite series of volitions producing one another; but an infinite series of motives, according to which they do produce one another.

Dr. Reid holds, that "there are innumerable actions done by a cool and calm determination of the mind, with fore-thought and will, but *without motive.*" *Active Powers*, p. 275. This is directly contrary to Dr. West. He holds, as before quoted, "That the infallible connection between motives and volition cannot take place, till the mind has determined to examine the several motives or reasons for acting—In that case the mind will certainly choose that which appears the best;" Part II, p. 80; *i. e.* will certainly act *with* motive.—It is equally contrary to Dr. Reid himself. In the next page he grants, "that an action done without any motive can neither have merit nor demerit;" and says, that this is a self-evident proposition, and that he knows of no author that ever denied it. Now an action in which there is neither merit nor demerit, is not a moral action. But is not every action done by a cool and calm determination of the mind, with fore-thought and will, a moral action? If it be, since according to Dr. Reid, such an action may be done without a motive, it follows, that, directly contrary to what Dr. Reid himself asserts, an action done without a motive, can have merit or demerit: Or a moral action may have no merit or demerit in it. Or if an action done by a cool and calm determination of mind, be not a moral action, then in this controversy we have no more to do with it, than we have with the beating of the pulse



or winking of the eyes : For this controversy respects moral actions only.—Again, in the page last referred to, Dr. Reid tells us, “ If a man could not act without motive, he would have no power at all.” But if we have a power to act without motive, this power, according to Dr. Reid, does not enable us to do those actions, which have either merit or demerit ; *i. e.* moral actions. Therefore for the purposes of morality, of virtue and vice, reward and punishment, such a power would do us no good. So that according to Dr. Reid, we have no power to perform any moral action. For according to him, power to act with motive only, is no power at all. Therefore whatever power we have, is a power to act without motive. But a power to act without motive, is a power to perform those actions only, which have neither merit nor demerit ; *i. e.* which are no moral actions.—Yet in p. 277, he says, “ The actions, which are done without a motive, are of moment in the question concerning *moral liberty*.” By *moral liberty* I conclude, he means that liberty, in the exercise of which we act morally, or with merit or demerit. Therefore questions concerning this liberty are questions concerning *moral actions*. But how can those actions, which have no morality in them, be of moment in questions concerning *moral actions* ? Can the peristaltic motion or the action of the solids on the fluids in the human constitution, be of moment in a question concerning malice or envy ?

In the page last quoted, Dr. Reid says, “ If we have a power of acting without motive, that power joined to a weaker motive, may counterbalance a stronger.” What if it may ? The action or actions, which should be the result in such a case, would not be of a moral nature. For if an action done entirely without motive be not of a moral nature, as Dr. Reid grants, that which is done against the stronger motive, being on the whole done without motive, must also be not of a moral nature. As the weaker motive is



withstood and balanced by a part of the strength of the stronger, so far as a man acts against the excess of the strength of the stronger, he must act without motive. Therefore if a man be influenced by a regard to his duty, as with the force of 1, to preserve his temperance; and be influenced by his appetite, as with the force of 2, to intemperance, and then by a self-determining power determine himself to temperance against the stronger motive; there is according to Dr. Reid's own concession, no virtue and no morality in the determination. Who then would wish for such a power as this? And why did Dr. Reid think it worth his while, to dispute for it? Surely in disputing for it, he spent his time and strength in a very useless manner.

Though Dr. Reid holds, as just quoted, that "if a man could not act without motive, he would have no power at all;" yet he holds, as has been quoted also, that "the influence of motives is perfectly consistent with liberty and indeed supposes it." And he defines liberty, p. 251, to be "a power over the determinations of the will." Therefore as "the influence of motives is perfectly consistent with liberty and supposes it;" and as "a power over the determinations of the will" is liberty; the influence of motives is perfectly consistent with "a power over the determinations of the will:" And if a man could not act without motive, but always acted under the influence of it, he in the first place, "would have no power at all;" in the second place, he would have some power; viz. "a power over the determinations of his own will," which according to him, is *liberty*, and not only is consistent, with the influence of motive, but is supposed in it.—But the defenders of the self-determining power are fated to inconsistency, and self-contradiction, and not one of them more so than this Dr. Reid.

He also holds, that in order to have any power at all, we must have a power to act without motive, and therefore



therefore without the influence of motive. But the influence of motive is, according to his own concession, supposed in liberty. Therefore to have any power at all, we must have a power to act without that which is supposed in liberty and therefore without liberty itself: And if we have that which is supposed in liberty, and of course have liberty itself, we have no power at all; *i. e.* if we have a power over the determinations of our own will, which is liberty; we have no power at all and have no liberty; or if we have power and liberty, we have no power nor liberty.— But it is endless to trace the absurdities of the self-determining power and of the most acute writer that ever undertook the defence of it. It is indeed a burdensome stone, which like that of *Sisyphus*, will forever roll down on the heads of those who give it a place in their building.

If we have a power to act without motive, we have a power to act without end or design; and such an action is as totally without morality, as the blowing of the wind, or the motion of a cannon-ball: And a power to perform such an action, is not a power to perform any moral action, nor can such a power be called *moral* liberty; but it is a power to divest ourselves, in that action at least, of all moral agency.

To choose any thing without motive, is really a contradiction; it is to choose it and not choose it, at the same time. Whatever is chosen, is chosen as being agreeable in some respect or other; and whatever is agreeable, is agreeable either in itself immediately, or on account of its connection with something else and its subserviency to it, which something is immediately agreeable in itself. Now whatever is agreeable on account of its connection with something else, is chosen on account of that something else, as the motive. Whatever is in itself agreeable to a man, is chosen from the motive of his appetite, taste or bias, which is included in President Edwards's sense of motive. And whatever is not agreeable to a man on one or



other of these accounts, is not agreeable at all, and therefore is not chosen.

To choose an object without motive, is to choose it without any end or design, either of immediate or remote gratification of any principle in him, who makes the choice : And whether this be possible or conceivable, I wish every candid person to judge.

An act of choice without a motive, in the large sense of motive as defined by President Edwards, is an event without a cause : For every cause of volition is included in President Edwards's definition of motive. "By motive," says he, "I mean the whole of that which *moves*, excites or invites the mind to volition, whether it be one thing singly, or many things conjunctly ;" p. 5. Accordingly in his further explanation of his idea of motive, he mentions all agreeable objects and views, all *reasons* and arguments, and all internal biases and tempers, which have a tendency to volition ; *i. e.* every *cause* or occasion of volition. And if an immediate divine influence or any other extrinsic influence, be the cause of volition, it may be called a *motive* in the same sense that a bias is. Now, if an act of choice be without motive in this sense, it is absolutely without a cause. The evasion of Doctor Clarke and others, that the mind itself is the cause of its own volitions, has been already considered ; beside other absurdities, it has been found to lead to an infinite series of volitions causing one another ; which is as great an absurdity, as an infinite series of men begetting one another.—Or if it were allowed, that a man does efficiently cause his own volitions without motive ; still he must cause them without design or end, and therefore must cause them in the dark and by mere chance.

Archbishop King in Law's edition, p. 394, says, "The will cannot be determined to good by objects." Then all the good and evil in the universe cannot determine one act of the will. In p. 354, he says, "The more free any one is and the less liable to ex-  
" ternal



“ ternal motions, the more perfect he is.” Therefore the less liable a man is to be influenced by the divine law and its precepts, by the beauty of virtue, by right and wrong, by the divine glory, or by the rewards and punishments of virtue and vice here or hereafter ; the more perfect he is !!!

If motives have not influence on men they are not capable of moral government. The whole of moral government depends on influencing the subject by the motives of laws, precepts, penalties, rewards and punishments, &c.

However, the Archbishop is perhaps the most consistent advocate for self-determination, that has ever written. Clarke, Johnson, Price and Reid grant too much. They grant, though they do not hold to it throughout, that the will always acts according to motives, and allow the influence of motives ; yet they hold, that the will determines itself and causes its own acts ; which is just like the idea of some concerning the power of the civil magistrate, a power to govern the people, who have the entire government of the magistrate. But Archbishop King strikes a bold stroke. He holds, that there is “ a faculty” in human nature “ naturally inclined to exercise, and that one exercise “ is more agreeable than another, not from any natural fitness in one rather than another ; but from the “ application of the faculty itself : For another would “ often be no less agreeable, if it had *happened* to be “ determined to that.” Ibid, p. 269. “ It is the very “ nature of an *active* power, to make an object agreeable to itself, *i. e.* good, by its own proper act. “ For here the goodness of the object does not precede the act of election, so as to excite it, but election makes the goodness in the object ; that is, the “ thing is agreeable because chosen, and not chosen “ because agreeable. We cannot therefore justly inquire after any other cause of election, than the “ power itself.” Ibid, p. 279, 280. It seems then, that it is the nature of a self-determining power to exercise

*Johnson*



exercise itself, not in any particular manner, but in any manner and every possible manner. It presses like water in a cistern on every side alike, endeavouring to flow out in exercise. And whenever it does in fact flow out in any particular exercise, there was no cause or reason for this exercise, more than for any other possible exercise: The only cause or reason is the natural inclination of this power to flow out in any and all possible exercises. This is just as good accounting for any particular exercise of this power as it would be, to account for the Archbishop's writing his book, by saying, that he had a general power and inclination to write something or other.

In this scheme of Dr. King, we see the genuine idea of *liberty of indifference*: It is an equal inclination, previously to election, to all possible elections and volitions, and a perfect indifference to all conceivable objects; so that no particular object or situation is more suited to give pleasure or misery to a man, than another; and pleasure and pain are the consequence and depend entirely on a man's own choice and will; so that it is entirely in a man's power and depends entirely on his own will, to render Nebuchadnezzar's furnace more pleasant, than a bed of down perfumed with roses.

It is further observable, that according to this account of the self-determining power, whenever it does exercise itself, it does it by *mere chance*, or as Dr. King himself expresses it, it *happens* to be determined to that exercise. Thus we have the famous liberty of contingency or perfect uncertainty, a liberty of blind fate or chance!

Our opponents hold, that the governing influence of motive is inconsistent with liberty and moral agency; then if a man be influenced by any motive to a compliance with the gospel and its precepts, or by any temptation to the commission of any action commonly reputed ever so criminal; in reality there is no virtue in the former nor vice in the latter: Be-  
cause



cause the influence of the motive destroys liberty and moral agency, the man is wrought upon by an extrinsic cause and therefore is a mere patient and not an agent. Therefore no man needs to be at all afraid of any temptation, nor according to this scheme ought *the Lord's Prayer* to remain any longer without correction: The light of this improved age requires a new edition of it *corrected and improved*.

If it be objected, that motives do indeed have an influence to persuade men, but not a *certain infallible* influence; I answer, just so far as they have influence, their influence is certain and infallible, because it is an influence that really exists. That which does exist, *certainly* exists, and it is an infallible truth, that it does exist.

Or if it be pleaded, that the mind is still free, because motives are not the efficient causes of volition; I answer, that the same plea would prove, that a West-India slave is free, because his actions are not efficiently caused by his master or driver, and they only exhibit such motives as influence the slave himself to perform those actions: And the same plea will prove, that moral necessity is perfectly consistent with liberty. For moral necessity is a mere previous certainty of a moral action; and this is no more the efficient cause of the action, than the persuasive motive, which is the occasion of an action.

I am entirely willing, that the advocates for the self-determining power should take their choice of either Dr. Clarke's scheme of *constant concomitancy* of motives and volitions; or Archbishop King's scheme, that motives have no influence, and that previously to election all things are perfectly indifferent to the man who makes the election. If they choose to adopt the scheme of *constant concomitancy*, they at once allow an infallible connection between motives and volition; they must give up the power to act or not act, the liberty to either side, and their favourite argument from choosing one of several indifferent things;  
they



they must renounce the independence and sovereignty of the will, and allow that it is as really bounded, limited and controlled by motives, as the slave is by his driver, or as the will is by moral necessity ; and there is nothing of their boasted liberty left worth contending for, nothing but the pitiful power of manufacturing volitions according to the mandates of motives ; just as a West-India negro manufactures sugar under the lash of his driver.

Or if they choose Archbishop King's scheme ; absurdities no less glaring will follow. If all things before election be indifferent, then every election is made without motive, reason, end, design or any consideration right or wrong ; every act of choice is an act of as perfect stupidity, as the motion of a canon ball or the falling of a stone ; every man by choice or rejection makes any object either agreeable or disagreeable, good or bad, to himself ; every man, in every situation has the perfect control of his own happiness and misery ; and it is but for him to choose to lie on a gridiron, which he can as easily do, as choose any thing else, and he converts it into a bed of roses.—This is self-determination *to some purpose*.

Such exclamations as the following have been made, in relation to this subject ; “ If man be governed by motives, how is he free ? Where is freedom ? What liberty has man more than a beast ? All his actions are subject to a fatal chain of causes and effects ? ” But such exclamations may justly be retorted, on either of the forementioned hypotheses of determining our own volitions agreeably to motives, or without motives. If we determine them agreeably to motives only ; then we are limited to motives, we can go in one track only, we can act no otherwise than according to the dictates of sovereign and all controlling motives. Then “ how is man free ? Where is freedom ? What liberty has man more than a beast ? All his actions are subject to a fatal chain of motives.”—Or if it be said, that we determine



termine our own volitions without motives, end, design or any consideration good or bad ; as in this case we act with perfect stupidity, it may with the greatest propriety be demanded, “ How are we free ? Where is freedom ? What liberty has man more than a beast ? ”

If there be, as Dr. Clarke, Dr. Price, &c. allow, a constant concomitancy or connection between motives and volitions ; this connection is an established law ; as really such, as the connection between a certain temperature of the seasons and the growth of vegetables. Now of this establishment there is some author : It is an effect and has an efficient cause. Nor will it be pretended, that the mind, which is the subject of the volitions, is the efficient cause of this establishment. This beside other difficulties attending it, would imply a direct contradiction ; as it is now granted, that the mind acts invariably according to motives ; and yet in establishing the influence of motives, it must act without that influence, *i. e.* without motive. For a motive can have no influence, before influence is given to it ; and nothing can be a motive, which has no persuasive influence or tendency. Therefore the influence of motives and the connection between them and volitions, are the effects of some cause extrinsic to the mind. And this causation of the influence and consequences of motives, or of the connection between motive and volition, is really a causation of volitions themselves, and that by an extrinsic cause.—Thus the authors just mentioned and those who with them acknowledge a constant concomitancy of motives and volitions, are brought into a dilemma. If they hold that this concomitancy and constant connection is caused by the mind itself, they must grant, that it is caused without motive, and so contradict the very principle they grant, of constant concomitancy. If they allow, that this connection is caused by some other cause, than the mind itself ; they must of course grant, that volitions are the effects of an extrinsic cause,



“ If volition and agreeable perception,” says Dr. West, p. 12, “ be one and the same thing, then motive and volition are one and the same thing : For nothing can be a motive, but an agreeable perception ; or ——— motive is the perceiving of the fitness of an object to answer a particular purpose.” Hence he argues, that “ if motive be agreeable perception, and agreeable perception be a volition, and motive be the cause of an act of the will, then an act of the will is the cause of an act of the will.” And that “ motive and volition are one and the same thing.”——No doubt Dr. West has a right to tell his own sense of the word *motive*. But when President Edwards has particularly given his sense of that word, and it appears to be entirely different from that of Dr. West, the Doctor has no right to argue from his sense, to confute the President. He by motive meant not only a perception of the fitness of an object to a particular purpose, but, as has been already observed, “ the whole of that which moves, excites or invites the mind to volition ;” and not only “ the views of the mind,” but “ the state, frame, temper and habit of the mind,” however caused. Therefore many volitions may be caused or occasioned by motive in this sense, which are not caused by any perception at all, but by appetite, bias, taste, &c. And if a man perceive ever so clearly the fitness of an object to answer a particular purpose, and in this respect its agreeableness, this is not the same as actual choice of that object, all things considered. A man may perceive, that hard and constant labour is well fitted to the increase of his property ; yet he may not choose it.

Though it should be said, that every agreeable perception is a volition ; it would not follow, that a volition is a motive to itself, which is what Dr. West means, if he mean to fix any absurdity, in saying, that motive and volition are one and the same. There is no absurdity in the supposition, that one volition should be a motive to another volition ; that a strong  
wish



wish for honour should be a motive to determine a man to generosity, hospitality, a general good treatment of his neighbours, and many services useful to the public; and charity requires us to believe, that a desire to do good, was the motive, which made Dr. West willing to write and publish his *Essays on Liberty and Necessity*.—The principle from which Dr. West endeavours to fasten an absurdity on President Edwards, is that nothing can be a motive but an agreeable perception; which is both contrary to truth and contrary to President Edwards.

Archbishop King speaks abundantly of “depraved elections.” What does he mean by *depraved elections*? Elections not according to truth, reason or divine revelation? But if a man were to choose according to these, he must not be persuaded to such election by *any regard* to truth, reason or divine revelation; this would imply, that all things were not perfectly indifferent to him before election, and that some things are chosen, because they are previously adapted to excite choice, and not agreeable merely because they are chosen, as he holds in places before quoted. Besides; if a man choose what is agreeable to truth, reason or revelation, *from a regard* to truth, reason or revelation, or which is the same thing, from the motive of truth, reason or revelation, he is *persuaded, influenced and wrought upon* by those motives; consequently he is *passive* in being the subject of this influence of the motives, and not free in the sense of freedom, which the Archbishop holds—Again, if a man choose what is dictated by truth, reason or revelation, from regard to any thing else than truth, reason or revelation; as he is influenced by motive, which is the thing which he regards, he is in the same sense not free. Therefore to be free in that sense he must choose it from no regard to any thing, but without motive, end or design. And in such a choice what there is of depravity or virtue, more than there



is in the shining of the sun or in the blowing of the wind, let any man point out.

Whether there be an infallible connection between motives and volitions or not; still so far as they influence and have effect; so far the subject is wrought upon by an extrinsic cause and is passive; and therefore according to our opponents, so far his liberty and moral agency are destroyed. Why then should motives ever be used with any man? We ought not to use them, wishing that they may have no effect or influence at all. Nor ought we to use them, to destroy moral agency, and to turn men into machines. For what purpose then should we use them? We commonly use them to persuade. But to persuade is to influence a man by motive, which is an extrinsic cause; and under the influence of motive, he is passive; and in such a case our opponents say his liberty and moral agency is destroyed. But if they be not in this way destroyed; an infallible connection between motive and volition is not inconsistent with liberty; and therefore why should Dr. West or any other man dispute against it?

Most, if not all writers in favour of self-determination allow, that men *generally* act on motive; and I presume they would not deny, that whenever they do act on motive, they are *persuaded* to act *by the motive*. Therefore on their principles, men are generally deprived of liberty and moral agency, generally act as mere machines and passive instruments; and all their objections against an infallible connection between motives and volition, may be retorted, with respect to the general conduct of mankind: And as to the liberty and moral agency exercised in some rare instances, when men act without motive, as when they are supposed to choose between things perfectly indifferent; it is a mere trifle not worth disputing about.

Dr. Price declares (Correspondence with Priestly, p. 347,) "That by determining as we please," he means, "our possessing a power to make either of two  
 " motives



“ motives the strongest ; *i. e.* to make either of them  
 “ the motive that shall prevail, and the motive on  
 “ which we shall please to determine.” But this act,  
 by which we make one motive the strongest, must be  
 without motive. If it be not without, but be under  
 the influence of motive, not we, but that prior motive  
 makes that motive strongest, on which we please to  
 determine. And as the compliance with that prior  
 motive is an act in which we determine as we please,  
 a still prior motive is necessary to that act, and we  
 must give strength to that motive too, and so on to  
 infinity.—On the other hand, if without motive we  
 make one motive stronger than another, we in this  
 case at least act without motive ; which is contrary  
 to what Dr. Price abundantly professes : He says,  
 “ A self-determining power which is under *no influ-*  
 “ *ence from motives*, has never been meant by any  
 “ advocates for liberty.”—But if we may and do  
 act without motive in making one motive to prevail ;  
 why may we not immediately act without motive, as  
 well as first without motive make one motive the  
 strongest, that we may comply with it ? Besides ; to  
 give strength to a motive, that we may comply with  
 it, is really, in the act of giving that strength, to com-  
 ply with the motive, and to choose the object which  
 it recommends. It is like giving money to a friend,  
 that he may procure for us a certain commodity.  
 This certainly implies, that we choose and wish for  
 that commodity.

In the same page Dr. Price puts the question ;  
 “ Has a man urged by contrary inclinations, no con-  
 “ trolling power over his inclinations, to make one of  
 “ them preferably to the other, the inclination which  
 “ he will follow ?” I answer, no ; there is a contra-  
 diction in it. The supposition implies, that before  
 he “ makes one of them the inclination that he will  
 “ follow,” it is not the inclination which he chooses  
 to follow. But this is not true : In that he volunta-  
 rily makes it the inclination that he will follow, it is

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implied



implied that he is inclined to follow it. He is willing and chooses to follow it, and therefore he voluntarily makes it the inclination, which he will follow. Thus it is previously what he makes it to be; and he is willing before he is willing. In making it the inclination, which he will follow, he does follow it. He follows it before he follows it.

Dr. Price in the same book, p. 348, says, "I am sensible, that it is nonsense, to deny the influence of motives, or to maintain that there are no fixed principles and ends, by which the will is guided." Then is it not nonsense, to assert, that we give strength to motives? And that we make an inclination, the inclination that we will follow? This seems to be the inevitable consequence, unless we give strength to one motive, under the influence of another, and so run into the infinite series.

Dr. Clarke in his Remarks on Collins, p. 12, 13, supposes, that motives have *some* influence, but not a prevailing, governing one; and that over and above the persuasive influence of motives, the self-determining power must by its own force exert itself to produce volition. Thus, p. 12, he reprobates the supposition, that if a man be not determined by motives necessarily, *i. e.* certainly and really; he can in no degree be influenced by them. But to be influenced by motives, is to be really and effectually influenced, just so far as the subject is influenced by them at all: And so far as he is influenced or persuaded by them, so far is he governed and determined by them: For that is what we mean by a determination by motives. On the other hand, so far as a man is not influenced or determined by motive, he acts without motive and without regard to it. So that there is no medium between no real or persuasive influence of motive, and a *determining governing* influence.

Again, p. 14, he reprobates the idea, "that motives and reasons can be of no weight and no use at all to men, unless they *necessitate* them; and that  
" if



“ if a person be not determined *irresistibly*, then he must be totally indifferent to all actions alike, and can have no regard to motives and reasons of action at all.” By *necessitating* and *determining irresistibly*, if he mean any thing to the purpose, he must mean really and actually to influence by persuasion, so as to give some bias or inclination to the will. And it is plain, that if motives do not at all bias or incline the will, the man remains in a state of total indifference, and “ has no regard to motives or reasons of action at all.” Nor is there any medium between an inclination of the will and total indifference ; for this is the same as to say, that there is no medium between an inclination of the will and no inclination of it. And if “ motives and reasons” do not incline men’s wills and have no previous tendency to incline them, “ they are of no weight or use at all to men ;” and if a person be not really inclined by them, he is totally indifferent to them.

In the same page, the Doctor considers it as needing proof, “ that a self-moving power is inconsistent with having any regard to reasons of acting.” So far as a person is persuaded to act, by reasons and motives ; so far he is *influenced* by motives, in the sense, in which we hold, that any person is influenced by them ; therefore so far is not self-determined or self-moved. Or if by self-determination be meant, that under the effectual persuasion of motives, we cause our own volitions ; (though we deny the possibility of causing our own volitions) yet as to liberty in the sense in which I oppose it, it would come to the same. The slave, who always acts by motives exhibited by his master, is as absolutely controlled by his master, as the whip in the master’s hand. Besides, to be effectually persuaded by motive to volition, and to cause our own volition independently of extrinsic influence, is a direct contradiction.

“ The doing of any thing *upon* or *after* or *in consequence of*, that perception” (the perception of motive)



tive) "this is the power of self-motion or action;  
 " which ——— in moral agents we call *liberty*."——  
 If the doing be merely in consequence of motive,  
 without any *influence* of the motive persuading to the  
 doing; that which in this case is called a motive, is  
 very improperly so called. So a motive would be  
 no reason at all for the doing: If it be a reason and  
 properly a *motive*, it *moves* the agent to the doing;  
 consequently the doing is not *self-motion*, unless self-  
 motion and motion excited by an extrinsic cause are  
 one and the same. Nor is this motion a *free action*  
 in a sense opposed to moral necessity. It is not free  
 from extrinsic causality, nor of course free from a de-  
 pendence on an extrinsic cause. Every effect is de-  
 pendent on its cause. Nor is it free with a liberty of  
 contingence. This implies, that something happens  
 without a cause.

If it should be said, that motive in this case is not  
 the *efficient* of the action or doing: This is granted;  
 but at the same time, for reasons already given, it is  
 denied, that the man himself is the efficient cause of  
 it. He who established the laws of nature, so called,  
 is the primary cause of all things. What is meant by  
 efficient cause in any case, in which an effect is pro-  
 duced according to established laws? For instance,  
 what is the efficient cause of the sensation of heat from  
 fire? If it be answered, fire is the efficient cause; I  
 also answer, that the motive is the efficient cause of  
 the volition and doing aforesaid. If it be said, that the  
 Great First Cause is the efficient of the sensation of  
 heat; the same Great Agent is the efficient cause of  
 volition, in the same way, by a general law establish-  
 ing a connection between motives and volitions; as  
 there is a connection between fire in certain situations  
 and the sensation of heat.

To allow, that we are free, though we always act in  
 consequence of motives, unless by acting be meant an  
 action not excited or influenced by motive, and of  
 which the motive is no reason, is to plead for no oth-



er liberty, than is perfectly consistent with the most absolute moral necessity and with absolute decrees.

Doctors Clarke and Price consider the man free, who efficiently causes his own volitions according to motives, because he himself and not the motives, is the efficient cause. Yet as by the supposition he causes them according to motives, he is limited by them. And is a slave free, who manufactures a commodity under the control and lash of his master? Or is the convict free, who himself walks around the stake, to which he is chained? Yet according to the system of the said gentlemen, the slave and not the master is the efficient cause of his own volition to labour. The convict and not the stake, is the efficient cause of his own volition to walk around the stake. Nor is the master the efficient cause of the limitation of the volitions of his slave; he merely exhibits the motives to their limitation: And it will not be pretended, that the stake is the efficient cause of the limitation of the volition of the convict.

Dr. Price, in Correspondence with Priestly, p. 341, says, "that no influence of motives, which is short of making them physical efficient or agents, can clash with liberty." Now the walls, gates and bars of a prison are not *physical efficient or agents*; yet they are as inconsistent with the liberty of the prisoner, as if they were such efficient and agents, and stood around him with gun and bayonet, to confine him to the spot; or as if they had built and made themselves for the purpose of his confinement. So if man be limited to act agreeably to motives only, they are as inconsistent with his liberty, as they would be, if they were intelligent agents, had created themselves and had established the connection between themselves and volition. It is as to liberty, immaterial who or what has established the connection between motives and volitions, provided the connection be infallibly established: As it is immaterial as to the liberty of a prisoner, who or what made the walls, gates and bars of the prison,



whether the walls, gates and bars themselves, any extrinsic cause, or even the prisoner himself. If he had built and made them all, had locked himself in and had flung the key through the grates, he would be as effectually deprived of his liberty, as if the same things had been done by any other agent.—These observations lead to a further answer to the plea, that we give strength to the motive which determines us. What if a man should give strength to a motive? After it is thus become strong, it as effectually governs the man, and as really deprives him of his liberty, as if it had derived its strength from any other source. Suppose a man were possessed of creating power, and should create another man stronger than himself, and this other man should bind the former hand and foot: Would he not be as effectually deprived of his liberty, as if he had been in the same manner bound by any other man?



## CHAPTER V.

*In which it is inquired, whether Volition be an Effect and have a Cause.*

THE title of Dr. West's second *essay* is, "That volition is not properly an effect, which has a cause." Whether his meaning be, that it is an effect which has no cause, or that it is not an effect at all, the words do not determine; but from the sequel I conclude, the latter is his meaning. This, as has been already noticed, is indeed contradicted by the Doctor, as in this passage, p. 24, "The modification in question" (*i. e.* the modification which the mind gives itself in willing or acting, which the Doctor explains to be volition) "is the consequence or EFFECT of the mind willing or choosing." Then volition is an *effect*; and an effect of a preceding volition.

I presume the Doctor has the merit of originality in this part of his system. Many things in the common scheme of self-determination do indeed imply, that volition has no cause; viz. Liberty as opposed to all necessity or certainty; the sovereignty and independence of the will; its exemption from all influence of motive or extrinsic cause, &c. Still I have not met with one writer before Dr. West, who had boldness enough expressly to avow the sentiment. Dr. Clarke and all the rest hold, that volition is the effect of the mind itself in the exercise of its self-moving or self-determining power. And Doctor Price, when charged by Dr. Priestly with holding, that volitions come to pass without a cause, rejects the imputation and takes it hardly, that ever it should have been made to him or his system. Correspondence with Priestly, p. 349.

But let us examine the reasons, by which Dr. West endeavours to support this doctrine. They are the following;

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1. That



1. That volition is an abstract term and signifies something, which cannot exist without a subject; or volition is nothing but the mind willing or acting; and therefore is not an effect; p. 21.—But suppose volition be nothing but *the mind willing or acting*; is that state of the mind or the mind in that state, not an effect? Dr. West will not deny, that the mind absolutely considered is an effect. If then the mind *willing* or in the exercise of volition, is not an effect; it seems, that the mind while without volition is an effect or a creature; but in the exercise of volition ceases to be an effect, and therefore ceases to be a creature. Will Dr. West avow this?—Motion is an abstract term and signifies something, which cannot exist without a subject; or motion is nothing but a body moving. But will it hence follow, that motion or a body moving is not an effect? No more does it follow from the argument of Dr. West now under consideration, that volition is not an effect? The Doctor grants, that volition is the modification or mode of the mind; and is not that mode an effect? If it be not an effect, because it is a mode of the mind, then doubtless no other mode of the mind is an effect. And strip the mind of all its modes, and you will take away the mind itself; because some of those modes are *essential* modes. If all the modes of the mind, essential and accidental, taken singly and collectively, be not effects; the mind itself is not an effect.—On the principle of Doctor West's argument, no mode whatever is an effect. The principle is this, That whatever cannot subsist of itself out of any subject, is not an effect. But no mode, solidity, extension, figure, colour or motion, can subsist without a subject. Therefore not one of them nor any other mode is an effect. And if not one of those modes by itself, is an effect, all of them taken together are not an effect; and therefore body or matter is not an effect: Yea neither matter nor spirit is an effect. And as matter and spirit with their modes, comprehend the whole creation; it will follow, that



that no *creature* is an effect; *i. e.* no creature is a creature.

2. That volition or the mind willing, is not an effect, because it is an efficient cause.—Dr. West believes, that a carpenter is the efficient cause of a ship: And does he therefore believe, that the carpenter in building the ship is not a creature? This would follow on the principles of this argument. The principle is, that whatever is an efficient cause, cannot be an effect. Therefore as a carpenter is the efficient cause of a ship, he is not an effect, or not a creature. Dr. West and others take it for granted, that if volition be an effect, it cannot be a cause. This is just as absurd as to hold, that unless a carpenter be uncaused, he cannot build a ship; and that a creature can be the cause of nothing.

3. That if the operation or action, which is essential to the idea of a cause, be itself an effect; then its cause must operate to produce the said effect; and consequently the last mentioned operation being an effect, must have another cause to produce it, and so on *in infinitum*; and this infinite series of causes and effects entirely excludes the first cause and any efficient cause; p. 22.—But it is denied, that in the case here supposed, an infinite series of causes and effects is involved. Suppose it be true, that the action which is necessary to constitute a man an efficient cause, be the effect of an extrinsic cause; how does it follow, that there must be, in this case, an infinite series of causes? We maintain that action may be the effect of a divine influence; or that it may be the effect of one or more second causes, the first of which is immediately produced by the Deity. Here then is not an infinite series of causes, but a very short series, which terminates in the Deity or first cause.—I know that it is often *supposed* and *asserted* by Dr. West, that volition cannot be an effect at all; and that it is *supposed* by all others, who maintain Dr. West's general scheme, that it cannot be an effect of an extrinsic



trinsic cause. But their supposing it is a mere assumption of the thing in dispute, in this part of the argument. Let them *prove* it and they will do something to the purpose.—Again ; the cause or series of causes, which is implied in the idea, that volition is an effect, is so far from excluding the first cause and any efficient cause, as Dr. West says, that it inevitably leads to the first cause, and implies, that there is an efficient cause of all volition in creatures, as well as of every thing else short of the first cause.

4. That volition in the Deity is no effect, but is only the Deity considered as willing or causing ; and therefore to assert, that volition is no effect, is not in itself an absurdity. Why then may we not assert, that volition in the creature is no effect ? P. 23.— On this I observe, It is granted, that volition in the Deity is not an effect ; but it no more hence follows, that volition in the creature is not an effect, than that existence and knowledge in the creature, are not effects, because they are not effects in the Creator.

5. That if human volition be an effect, then man must be passive in willing, but if he be passive in willing, he can be active in nothing else ; *i. e.* he is no agent, but a mere passive machine. But if man be active in willing, then volition cannot be the effect of an extrinsic cause, and will be nothing but the mind acting or operating ; p. 23.— No doubt if human volition be an effect, man is so far passive in willing, as to be the subject of the influence of that cause which produces volition ; still he is active too in volition, is still an agent and not a *mere* passive machine. In volition man is both passive and active ; passive as he is the subject of the influence of the cause which excites volition, and active in the exercise of it. As the day-labourer is passive in that he is influenced by the prospect of wages, to consent to labour, and active in exerting and in consenting to exert himself in labour. Nor does it follow from a man's being active in volition, that volition cannot be the effect of an extrinsic cause. The idea, that it does follow, takes  
for



for granted the very thing in question, viz. that an action cannot be an effect, especially of an extrinsic cause. Dr. West ought to have proved this.

Besides ; why does the Doctor say, " If man be active in willing, then volition cannot be the effect of any *extrinsic* cause ?" Ibid. His doctrine equally implies, that it is not the effect of an *intrinsic* cause. His doctrine is, that volition is, in general terms, not an effect and has no cause. But now, it seems the Doctor recedes from this, and holds only, that volition is not the effect of an *extrinsic* cause, implicitly granting, that it is *an effect*, and an effect of an *intrinsic* cause.

The Doctor tells us, that " if man be passive in willing ——— he is ——— a *mere passive machine* ;" p. 23. ——— How does this appear ? A man is passive in his intellectual views ; but is he in those views a mere passive *machine* ? The human intellect is very different from what we commonly call a *machine*. Or if by *machine* the Doctor mean any thing that is influenced by an extrinsic cause ; I grant, that in this sense, both the human intellect and human will are *machines* ; and in granting this, I grant no more than is implied in the moral necessity for which I plead. Yet such an application of the word *machine*, would be a gross perversion of it.

6. That the Deity has not only acted from all eternity ; but is continually acting upon the whole creation, for the preservation and government of it. Yet these operations and energies of the Deity are not effects, though they take place in time. Therefore the energies or volitions of the human mind are not effects, though they also take place in time ; p. 24. ——— But I deny, that the operations or energies of the Deity *begin* in time, though the effects of those operations do. They no more begin in time, than the divine existence does ; but human volitions all begin in time. There is no succession in the divine mind ; therefore no new operations take place there. All  
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the divine acts are equally from eternity, nor is there any *time* with God. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day." The *effects* of those divine acts do indeed all take place in time and in a succession.—If it should be said, that on this supposition the effects take place not till long after the acts, by which they are produced; I answer, they do so in our view, but not in the view of God. With him there is no time, no before nor after with respect to time; nor has time any existence either in the divine mind or in the nature of things, independently of the minds and perceptions of creatures; but it depends on the succession of those perceptions. So that from the consideration, that the divine energies and operations are no effects, it no more follows, that human volitions are no effects, than from the consideration that the divine existence and knowledge are no effects it follows, that *our* existence and knowledge are no effects.

7. That if volition were an effect, we could not be the *causes* of any effects: At the most we should be *mere passive instruments*; p. 25.—This wholly depends on the meaning of *words*, as most of Dr. West's arguments do. If by *cause* the Dr. mean a *self-determinate* cause, he, *as usual*, begs what he has no right to expect will be given him. But if by *cause* he mean a rational, voluntary agent, acting under the persuasive influence of light and motives; we may be such causes, though volition is an effect; and acting as such causes we may produce effects. Thus Noah built the ark; Moses hewed two tables of stone, &c.—And if under the name of a *passive instrument* the Doctor mean to include such a rational, voluntary agent, as I have just described; I grant, that in this sense we are passive instruments, and it is impossible, that a rational creature should be any other than such a passive instrument. But I reprobate the calling of such an agent a mere passive instrument, as a great abuse of language.

But



But suppose volition were not an effect; should we then be causes of effects? or should we then be less passive instruments? If volition were no effect, we ourselves should no more be the causes of it, than any extrinsic cause. It would happen in us by mere chance. And should we in the exercise of that volition, which is without cause and is merely accidental, be any more causes of an effect, than we should be in the exercise of a volition excited by a proper motive? If any reason can be given to show, that we should, let it be given. Though it may be pleaded, that when we become the subjects of volition by mere chance, we are not the subjects of the operation of a cause in the production of volition, and in that sense are not passive; yet in this case volition takes place in our minds equally without our causation, our previous agency or consent, as if the same volition were caused by something extrinsic. So that if we be not equally *wrought upon* in these two cases, we are equally *inactive*, and therefore can no more be *causes* in the one case, than in the other: And there is nothing more favourable to liberty or self-determination in the one case than in the other.

8. That if volition were an effect, we could have no more ideas of cause and effect, than a blind man has of colours. For we being passive in our ideas of sensations, they could never suggest to us the ideas of cause and effect; and if volition or internal action be the effect of an extrinsic cause, our reflections could never afford an example of an efficient cause, and so we must for ever be destitute of the ideas of cause and effect; p. 25.—On this I observe,

(1.) It wholly depends on the meaning of the word *cause*. If as I before observed, it mean a self-determinate cause, which “acts on itself and produces volition;” I grant, that we have no idea of such a cause, more than a blind man has of colours. Nor has Dr. West any idea of such a cause, as he reprobates it and does not believe in its existence. Neither God

nor



nor creature can be such a cause as this ; it is an impossibility ; it is perfectly like the animal, which President Edwards supposed the traveller professed to have seen in *Terra del fuego*. But if cause mean a rational, voluntary agent producing effects under the influence of motives ; such causes we ourselves are or may be ; and the idea of such a cause we derive from every artificer, whom we see employed at his trade, from every husbandman, who in our view tills the ground, and from every external action which we perform.

(2.) Though we are passive in our ideas of sensation, yet every idea of that kind, for the very reason that we are passive in it, suggests to us the ideas of both cause and effect. In that we are passive in those ideas both cause and effect are implied. If no cause operated upon us to produce the effect, sensation, we should not be passive in sensation. It is true, the becoming passively the subjects of sensation, does not suggest to us the idea of a self-determinate or self-actuating cause ; for such a cause does not exist, is an impossibility, and therefore no idea of it can be conceived ; as I have already endeavoured to show.

(3.) This argument supposes, that we get the idea of an efficient cause by the experience, that we ourselves are the efficient causes of volition. But in the first place we deny, that we ever do experience ourselves to be the efficient causes of volition : And in the second place, if we did, it would be entirely inconsistent with Dr. West's proposition now under consideration ; it would prove, that volition is an effect, and that we ourselves are the efficient causes of it.

(4.) Be it so that " our reflections can never afford us an example of an efficient cause ;" what absurdity follows ? We avow that our reflections cannot afford us an example of such a cause. We neither efficiently cause our own volitions nor our own perceptions. Yet we are not destitute of ideas of  
cause



cause and effect, as I have already shown.—But certainly according to Dr. West our reflections do not afford us an example of an efficient cause of volition ; for volition is, according to him, no effect and has no cause.

9. That if our volitions were the effects of an extrinsic cause, we could never have the idea of dependence and independence, and therefore could not connect our ideas together, *i. e.* could not be rational beings. And as we are rational beings, it follows, that our volitions are not the effects of an extrinsic cause, but that we are self-determinate, and that we get the ideas of dependence and independence, by experiencing in ourselves, that in willing and choosing we act independently of any extrinsic cause ; p. 25.

This implies, that in volition we act independently, and that from such independent actions we derive the idea of independence. But this again is a sheer begging of the question. How does it appear, that we act independently ? The Doctor might as well have taken it for granted, that we act self-determinately. We no more grant, that we acquire the idea of independence, by experiencing it in volition, than that we acquire the idea of an efficient cause by experiencing ourselves to be the efficient causes of our own volitions. And if any man have the idea, that any creature is in volition independent of all extrinsic causes, this idea is not allowed to be according to truth. As to the divine independence, which is indeed entire and absolute, Dr. West will not pretend, that we get the idea of this by experiencing the like independence in ourselves. We no more get that idea in this way, than we get the idea of the divine omnipotence, by experiencing omnipotence in ourselves. So that though we have the ideas of dependence and independence, can connect our ideas together and are rational beings, it by no means follows, as Dr. West infers, “ that our volitions are not the effects of an extrinsic cause, and that we are self-determinate.”

And



And why does the Doctor continually deny volition to be the effect of an *extrinsic* cause? The proposition which he has undertaken to support, equally implies, that it is not the effect of an *intrinsic* cause.

10. That volition is only the relation of the energy of a cause in producing an effect, and therefore is not an effect, and has no proper existence of its own; p. 26.—If volition be only the *relation* of the energy of a cause, it is not the *energy* itself or *action* of a cause; and how then is it a part of the subject of the present inquiry? The present inquiry and discussion relate to the voluntary *actions* of a rational being. As to the relations and external denominations of those actions, they may be and commonly are different in every action, yet the actions themselves may be the same.—Besides; the Doctor will not pretend to deny, that volition is an action of the mind, or as he chooses to express it, *the mind acting*. And is the mind acting only the relation of the energy or action of that mind? And has the mind acting “no proper existence of its own?” If it have, it is an effect doubtless, because it is a creature. An action of the human mind is an event, and an event coming to pass in time, and therefore has a cause: And Dr. West says, he “cannot be charged with holding, that events “take place without a cause;” p. 27.

11. That no agent can bring any effect to pass, but what is consequent on his acting. Therefore it is very absurd to call the acting or activeness of a being, an effect; because it introduces the utmost absurdity into language, by confounding and blending things together, which are very different; p. 28.—It is an undoubted truth, that no agent can bring any effect to pass, but what is consequent on his acting. But how does it hence follow, that it is very absurd to call the action of a being an effect? And how does this confound and blend things together, which are very different? It will not be denied, that the prophesying of a prophet may be the act of that prophet; yet acting by



by inspiration he is excited to that act by a divine agency. No doubt the Divine Being brings to pass this effect by a previous act or exertion of himself. But where is the absurdity of calling this prophesying an effect of the divine influence? How does the calling of it so, confound and blend the divine influence and the act of the prophet, which are acknowledged to be very different from each other?

12. That cause and effect are not synonymous terms; and therefore "in whatever sense any thing is a cause, in that sense it is not proper to call it an effect; for this reason, that causes considered as causes, are not effects." Part II, p. 90. This is just as conclusive reasoning as if the Doctor had said, the words *tree* and *effect* are not synonymous terms. Therefore in whatever sense any thing is a *tree*, in that sense it is not proper to call it an *effect*; for this reason, that *trees* considered as *trees* are not *effects*. Rain considered as the cause of the growing of grass, is an effect; a medicine considered as the cause of a cure, is still an effect; and Dr. West considered as the author of several essays on liberty and necessity, is as really a creature of God, as he is when he is considered to be in the exercise of his favourite liberty or power of *not acting* and is in perfect *torpor*.—The Doctor proceeds, "The mind acting is the mind causing; for I conceive, whenever the mind acts, it produces some effect." Ibid. If the Doctor mean that whenever the mind is the subject of an *internal* act or volition, it produces some *external* effect; this is manifestly a mistake, and the Doctor himself will not avow it. If he mean, that whenever it is the subject of volition, it produces that volition as an *effect*; this in the first place is giving up what he himself had written an essay to prove, viz. that volition is not an effect; and secondly it is a begging of the main point. In short, Dr. West is a most sturdy metaphysical beggar. But as charity demands no gratuities to such beggars, he is to expect none.—He adds to the



last quotation, it “ will introduce the greatest confusion in language, to speak of the mind, considered as causing, as being an effect.” But what confusion of language is it, to speak of Dr. West considered as the author of essays on liberty and necessity, as being a creature? I hope, when the Doctor shall write again, he will *show* that it confounds language, and not merely *assert* it.

The Doctor, in the page last quoted, says, “ The question is, whether every act of the will is a new effect produced by the Deity or by some other extrinsic cause.” I do not allow this to be the question. The Doctor asserts in general terms, that volition is not properly an effect. The question is entirely general, whether volition be an effect of any cause, *extrinsic* or *intrinsic*. When this question shall have been settled, a subsequent one may arise, whether it be an effect of *extrinsic* cause.

Thus I have considered Dr. West’s arguments to prove, that volition is not an effect and has no cause. Whether they do really prove it, the reader will judge.

Dr. Price in his Correspondence with Priestly, p. 341, says, “ An agent that does not put himself in motion, is an agent that is always acted upon, and an agent that never acts.” On this I remark, that it is not true, that every agent, who does not put himself in motion, is always acted upon, by an extrinsic agent. The Deity did not at first put himself in motion, meaning by *motion* volition.—If he did, he was before without motion or volition. And Dr. Price would not pretend, that God existed from eternity without any volition, and that when he came down within the limits of time, he put himself into volition, *i. e.* he created volition in his own mind. Or if by being *acted upon*, Dr. Price meant, the Deity’s acting according to the most wise and holy reasons, which his infinite understanding can suggest; no doubt in this sense the Deity himself is acted upon; and if this be inconsistent with agency, instead of but one, as Dr. Price says, there



there is *not one* agent in the universe. God no more put himself in motion or volition at first, than he put himself into existence. Nor has he at any time put himself into any particular volition. This would imply a new thing and a change in God.

To say, that an agent that is acted upon cannot act, is as groundless, as to say that a body acted upon, cannot move; unless the main question is begged, by supposing, that action means self-determinate action.

The advocates for self-determination are in like manner guilty of begging the question, by using *active power* to mean a self-determining or self-moving power; a power which puts itself into exercise, without the agency or influence of any extrinsic cause. We deny the existence and possibility of such a power: We hold, that it is as impossible, as that an animal should beget itself, or take one step before the first step. If this be meant by *active power*, we deny that any being possesses it; and our opponents ought to be ashamed to beg it.

Dr. West holds, that volition is no effect and has no cause: He also holds, that volition is a modification of the mind. Indeed it is manifest, that the mind willing, is the mind in a different mode or differently modified, from what it was, when not willing. Now is the event of this modification taking place in the mind, not an effect? And is it uncaused? Then not only does an event come to pass without cause, which Dr. West denies; but it happens by mere blind, stupid, undesigning chance.—It might as well be said, that the event of a canon ball moving is not an effect, as that the event of the mind willing is not an effect.

It is pleaded, that if volition be the effect of an *extrinsic* cause, it is wholly passive: Dr. West joins with others in this plea, p. 23. But if volition be the effect of an *intrinsic* cause, it is equally passive. For as Dr. West himself says very rightly, p. 23, “Every effect is wholly passive with regard to the cause which produces it.”



Dr. West says, volition is "a property of a mind." P. 21, 22. Therefore when volition exists in the mind, it is the subject of a property of which before it was destitute. Now is not this an effect? Does not some efficient cause, either the mind itself or some other cause, endue it with that property, as really as if it were endued with any other property? Or as if a body were endued with a particular colour?

He further holds, page 6 and 7, that "virtue and vice are mere modes or attributes of a rational agent." But virtue and vice are voluntary acts of the mind, or volitions. Therefore volitions are modes or attributes of a rational agent. But according to him these modes have no cause and are no effects. And if some modes be not effects, how shall we know, that other modes or any modes are effects? If no modes be effects, since we know nothing of substances but by their sensible modes and qualities; how shall we know, that substances themselves are effects?

Volitions are acts and events: And if some events be uncaused, why may not all?

Dr. West contradicts and gives up his doctrine, that volition has no cause, in all those places, in which he allows, that volition is not without motive: As when he grants, "that the mind acts upon motives" ——— "that when the mind acts or chooses, "it always has some end, design or reason, which is "the occasion of its acting or choosing" ——— that "motives are the previous circumstances which are "necessary for action," &c. &c. Motives then are the reasons, the occasions, the necessary previous circumstances or antecedents of volition. And what are these but *second causes*? Causes in the sense, in which President Edwards explains himself to use the word *cause* with relation to this very subject, p. 41, 42. ——— We say, that fire is the cause of the sensation of heat; that rain and sun-shine are the causes of vegetation, &c. Yet they are no more than the stated antecedents. In the same sense motives, according to Dr.

West,



West, are causes of volitions. Besides, all second causes are the effects of the first cause. Therefore ultimately volitions are effects of the Great First Cause.

If volition be no effect, it is not the effect of the mind in which it exists. That mind has no control over it: It comes to pass without its wish or consent, as fully as if it were the effect of some extrinsic cause. How then is the mind any more, or in any more desirable sense, free, than if volition were produced by an extrinsic cause? Which would a wise man choose? to have all volitions take place by pure accident, by blind chance and fate? or to have them ordered by a wise and good cause, in the application of proper motives? And are we agents in the former of these cases, more than in the latter? On this hypothesis volitions are his, in whose mind they exist, in this sense only, that he is the subject of them. And this is true on the supposition, that they are caused by an extrinsic cause. And how on this plan, are we more accountable for our volitions and actions, than on the supposition, that they are produced in us by an extrinsic cause?

If volition be no effect and have no cause, it proceeds from no power or faculty in human nature as its cause; not from the power of will, nor even from any *self-determining power*, whether it consist in the will or in any other part of human nature. What then is the advantage of the self-determining power so strenuously advocated? It cannot produce one volition nor one free act. How then does liberty consist in it? or depend on it? Or how does it contribute any aid toward liberty? And what becomes of the boasted independence and sovereignty of the will?

That a volition is produced in me by some extrinsic cause, is not at all opposed to liberty, unless by *liberty* be intended *contingence* or an exemption from all causality. If I could cause a volition in myself, it would be as necessary, as if it were produced by some other cause. Dr. West rightly observes, that "every effect is wholly passive with regard to the cause,



“ which produces it.” As the volition then produced by myself is wholly passive, it could not be more passive, if it were produced by some extrinsic cause.

Dr. West, in p. 25, says, “ Our consciousness, that we are self-active, suggests to us the ideas of cause and effect, of dependence and independence :” *i. e.* Our consciousness that we are the bare subjects of volitions, which are no effects at all, whether of ourselves or of any other cause, and therefore are not dependent on any cause, suggests to us the ideas of cause and effect, dependence and independence. Whether this be rational, let the reader judge.

In p. 26, Dr. West explains himself to mean by *volition*, “ the relation of energy exerted by a cause in producing an effect ;” and says, “ It cannot be considered as being an effect of any cause whatever, or as having any proper existence of its own.” In support of this idea he quotes President Edwards, where he says, that action and passion are sometimes used to signify the mere relations of activeness of something on another, and of passiveness or of being acted upon by another thing ; and that in this case they do not signify any positive effect or cause or any real existences. Hence Dr. West infers, that according to President Edwards, he cannot be charged with holding that events take place without a cause.—On this it may be observed,

1. President Edwards tells us, that whenever the word action is used to signify a *mere relation*, it does not signify an *action* or some motion or exercise of body or mind. But Dr. West generally uses volition to signify an *action* or exercise of the mind : And yet in the passage now under consideration, he gives an explanation of volition, in which he says it signifies “ the relation of the energy of a cause,” and therefore not the energy itself, the exercise, exertion or act of that cause. President Edwards did not suppose, that the word *action* generally and properly signifies a mere relation ; but that it generally and properly signifies a  
positive



positive existence,\* or an event which has as real an existence, as any fact or event. As to the word *volition*, President Edwards never considers that as signifying a mere relation. Whereas Dr. West considers this to be the proper meaning of volition.

2. As to the passage, which Dr. West quotes from President Edwards, the latter had good reason to say, that when the *action* is used to express not any exertion, fact or event, but the *mere relation* of activity with respect to something as the subject; it signifies no effect or cause and no real existence. This may be illustrated by some other relation; as sonship, the relation between father and son. A father is a real existence, and every created father is an effect. So is a son. But *sonship* is no real existence; nor is it a proper effect or cause, more than the relation between the three angles of a triangle and two right ones. Now volition is not such a mere relation: It is a real positive act, motion or exercise of a mind; and Dr. West abundantly grants this.

3. If volition be a mere relation of energy, it is not "an exertion of an active principle," "an act of the will," "an exercise of the mind," &c. as Dr. West asserts it to be. Besides, if it be a mere "*relation* of the energy exerted by a cause" or mind, what is the energy, act, exercise or exertion of which volition is the relation? Surely an act or exertion, and the relation of that act; a thing and the relations of that thing, are not one and the same. The same thing may have different and opposite relations. The same man may sustain the opposite relations of a father and a son. And if such a man be the same thing with his relations, he is the same thing with his sonship, and the same thing with his fatherhood. Thus, as two things which agree with a common measure, agree between themselves, it will follow, that sonship and fatherhood are the same thing.

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\* It will be remembered, that logicians and metaphysicians divide beings into substance and mode, and consider modes as having as real and positive an existence, as substance.



4. By volition Dr. West means either an act of the mind, or not. If he do mean an act of the mind, volition with him is not a mere relation, but a proper positive event or fact; and therefore must be an effect and have a cause; or an event takes place without a cause. If he do not by volition mean an act of the mind, it is surely not a *free* act; and if we do not act freely in volition, we do not act freely at all, *i. e.* we are not free agents. It is generally granted, and to be sure Dr. West's whole book implies, that all the moral liberty which we have is exercised in volition. But if volition be a *mere relation*, and not an act and a free act; we have no liberty; and by holding, that volition is a mere relation and not an act, Dr. West gives up all that liberty for which he disputes.

The Doctor, in his second part, p. 12, grants that "acts of the will, volition, choice and determination of the mind may with *propriety* be called effects, when they signify those determinations or conclusions, which the mind makes in consequence of its comparing two or more things together." Therefore some acts of the will are effects. How is this consistent with what the Doctor holds both in his former book and in this, that volition cannot be properly called an effect? Besides; what the Doctor here says, is applicable to all volitions, and therefore all volitions are according to his own account, effects. For all volitions are "determinations or conclusions, which the mind makes in consequence of its comparing two or more things together." If two or more things be expressly proposed, and one of them be chosen, it is the very case here stated by Dr. West. Or if one thing only be expressly and positively proposed as the object of our choice, still there is a real competition between this thing and the absence or neglect of it; and the mind comes to a determination in consequence of its comparing these two together. Therefore according to Dr. West's own account every volition "may with propriety be called an effect;" and yet according to  
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the same Dr. West, "volition cannot be properly called an effect." "How can these things be?"

But Dr. West endeavours to evade this consequence, by saying, "I have used the term *volition* to signify "the mind considered as acting. In this sense and in "this only, I say volition is not an effect." But the mind considered as acting, acts in consequence of comparing two or more things together, and such an act Dr. West allows to be an effect. Also he grants, "that the human mind and all its powers and faculties are effects;" p. 13. But will he say, that the human mind with all its powers and faculties *dormant* and *inactive*, is an effect, but the same mind with its powers and faculties *acting*, is not an effect? And does it cease to be an effect or a creature, as soon as it begins to act?

"If volition be only the mind acting; and if the "mind acting is properly a cause, then it is not proper to call it an effect." Ibid, p. 13. But what or where is the impropriety of calling it an effect? In such a dispute as this, to assert such a novel proposition without proof or illustration, is unreasonable. By the same reasoning it may be proved, that any man who makes any thing is himself not an effect or creature. Thus, If a carpenter at work be properly a cause of a ship, then it is not proper to call him an effect or creature; and if Dr. West writing be properly the cause of several essays on liberty and necessity; then it is not proper to call him a creature.

"When volition is used to signify the mind acting, in that view it is properly a cause and not an effect;" *ibid*, p. 28. What if it be properly a cause? This does not prevent its being properly an effect too, any more than the Doctor's being properly the cause of several essays prevents his being, or proves that he is not, properly a creature of God.—"Causes as "causes, are not effects;" *ibid*, p. 13. Then authors as authors, are not the creatures of God.

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The Dr. argues, *ibid*, p. 94, That an action cannot be the effect of the Deity, because "an effect is most certainly passive in coming into being ——— but this will imply *passive action* or *inactive action*, which is absurd." I grant, that an effect is in this sense passive, that it is produced by the agency of the efficient cause; and in that sense a volition caused by the Deity or other efficient cause is passive. If Dr. West mean by passive action, an action which in its production is caused by an extrinsic cause, I grant it; and however Dr. West pronounces it *absurd*, he knows, that it is as easy for another to pronounce it *not absurd*; and the one pronounciation is just as good proof as the other. Volition is action, and if the Doctor will prove to the conviction of candid inquirers, that such an action cannot be the effect of a divine agency or other extrinsic cause; he will do something more than affirm the contrary to be absurd. As to the expression *inactive action*, if by this he mean, that the action is the effect of an extrinsic cause, I grant it, and demand proof that the idea of such an action is absurd. If he mean an action, which is not voluntary; I know of no person who pleads for such an action.

What the Doctor says here, as well as almost his whole book, may be easily retorted. Suppose volition is not from an extrinsic cause, but from the subject as the cause; still it is as really and fully passive with respect to its cause and in coming into existence, as if it were the effect of an extrinsic cause. It would as much be the subject of the operation of this intrinsic cause, in order to its existence. Therefore in this case too we have *passive action* and *inactive action*.

The Doctor in p. 23, Part I, says, "How can he" [man] "be an agent, if volition be the effect of an extrinsic cause?" To which I answer by asking another question or two; How can he in volition be  
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an agent, if it be the effect of an intrinsic cause? The volition is still as passive in this case and equally produced by the efficiency of its cause, as it is when produced by an extrinsic cause. And how can man be an agent, if as the Doctor holds, volition be the effect of no cause, extrinsic or intrinsic? In that case, it is merely casual or accidental, like the motion of one of Epicurus's atoms in the infinite void.

CHAPTER



## CHAPTER VI.

*Of Foreknowledge and the Certainty or Necessity implied in it.*

DR. West begins his third essay thus ; “ We shall  
 “ endeavour to show, in this essay, that infalli-  
 “ ble foreknowledge in the Deity does not prove, that  
 “ events take place in consequence of an antecedent  
 “ or previous necessity ;” p. 29. Let foreknowledge  
 prove or not prove what it will, unless events take  
 place absolutely without a cause, they do take place  
 in consequence of an antecedent or previous necessi-  
 ty. Unless they take place absolutely without a cause,  
 they are effects ; and every effect necessarily follows  
 its cause. Dr. West grants, p. 23, “ that every ef-  
 “ fect is wholly passive with regard to the cause which  
 “ produces it.” And as it is passive, it is brought into  
 existence by the causing or necessitating influence of  
 its cause. Its existence therefore “ takes place in  
 “ consequence of an antecedent or previous necessity ;”  
 and this is true of all events, which happen without  
 cause. But Dr. West denies, that any events take  
 place without a cause. Therefore he must concede,  
 that all events “ take place in consequence of an  
 “ antecedent necessity.”

If to this it should be said, that though all events are  
 effects, and are necessitated by their respective causes,  
 and in that respect take place in consequence of an  
 antecedent necessity : Yet as volitions are the effects  
 of the mind, in which they exist, this cause does not  
*produce* them or exert its producing act, in consequence  
 of an antecedent necessity ; I answer, The mind, if it  
 do efficiently cause volitions, causes them either in  
 consequence of an antecedent certainty, or without  
 that certainty. If it cause them in consequence of  
 antecedent certainty, it causes them under the influ-  
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ence of moral necessity ; for antecedent certainty of moral actions is all we mean by moral necessity. If it cause them without that certainty, it causes them contingently and by mere chance or blind fate.

Besides, if the mind cause its own volitions, it necessitates them into existence, and therefore they come into existence under the influence of antecedent necessity ; and the causing act is an event and therefore must have a cause, and *this* cause must necessitate *this* event into existence ; and so it runs into an infinite series of acts causing one another, every one of which comes into existence in consequence of an antecedent necessity.

That the infallible divine foreknowledge of any event does imply all that antecedent necessity of the future existence of that event, for which we contend, may appear thus :—The infallible or certain foreknowledge of any event is a knowledge of the certainty or certain truth, that the event will come into existence ; and that certainty which is the object of this knowledge, is all the necessity, for which we contend. This is what President Edwards calls philosophical necessity, which with regard to moral actions is moral necessity ; and it must exist at the time the knowledge of it exists, and indeed in order to be the object of knowledge : And as the knowledge is by the supposition *foreknowledge*, therefore it must exist before the event foreknown, and therefore the certainty or necessity of that event must exist before the event itself ; of course it is *antecedent* necessity. To suppose otherwise is to suppose, that a certainty or certain truth may be seen and known before it exists, and that what is not, may be seen and known to be.

Dr. West argues, p. 32, that because “ the Deity is  
 “ possessed of an underived self-existing knowledge,  
 “ which is independent of any cause or medium what-  
 “ ever, and his knowledge can extend to all futuri-  
 “ ties, independent of the imperfect mode of inferring  
 “ conclusions from their premises ; consequently in-  
 “ fallible



“fallible prescience in the Deity cannot imply any antecedent necessity of the event foreknown.” By antecedent necessity we mean antecedent certainty or antecedent certain truth. Now does Dr. West mean, that since the Deity possesses an underived and self-existent knowledge, therefore he sees and knows, that there is a certainty of the future existence of an event, when there really is no such certainty? Or that God knows that to exist, which does not exist? He does mean this, if he mean any thing to the purpose. For if he mean, that God sees a certainty which exists, it does exist in order to be seen; and therefore antecedent certainty or moral necessity is implied in the divine prescience. But let the knowledge of God be ever so underived, self-existent and independent, it will not enable him to discern that which is not, to see truth or certainty, before it exists, or to see truth to be falsehood and falsehood to be truth.—If by *independent* knowledge he mean a knowledge which is not dependent on the truth and has not truth for its foundation and object; he must still mean, that God can know a proposition to be true which is not true.

It is manifestly implied in what Dr. West says on this subject, that if divine foreknowledge were derived through any *medium*, or if it be founded on decrees, it would be utterly inconsistent with human liberty. But since it is, as he supposes, immediate and not dependent on decrees, it is perfectly consistent with human liberty.—That there will be a general rejection of antichrist and antichristian errors, we know by the medium of divine prediction: And does the Doctor believe that this our knowledge is more inconsistent with the liberty of those, who shall reject antichrist, than the absolute and underived knowledge of God? Or than our own knowledge of the same fact, if it were intuitive and underived?

The Doctor adds, “If this definition of the divine knowledge,” viz. that it is underived, self-existent and independent, “be just; then it will follow that there

“is



" is no previous or antecedent *certainty in the things*  
 " *themselves*, upon which divine prescience is founded."  
 This manifestly implies, that God foreknows things  
 before they are future, and sees a certainty before it  
 is. " By certainty," says the Doctor, " in the things  
 " *themselves*, previous to the divine knowledge, *must*  
 " *be meant* some medium distinct from the things them-  
 " *selves*, by which they render themselves evident  
 " to the divine knowledge." He here asserts, but  
 brings nothing to prove what he asserts. And what  
 signify such bare assertions? Does the Doctor expect  
 his readers will receive them as proofs? May they  
 not justly demand evidence, that this *medium* which he  
 here mentions, must be meant by certainty in things  
 themselves? By that certainty I mean no such thing:  
 But positively I do mean what President Edwards de-  
 clares that he meant, " The firm and infallible con-  
 " *nection* between the subject and predicate of the  
 " *proposition*," which affirms them to be connected;  
 or the *real truth* of the proposition. For instance it  
 is a real truth, that I am now writing, and the certain-  
 ty or reality of this truth or fact, is the ground of the  
 divine knowledge of it; and this certainty consists in  
 the firm and indissoluble connection of the subject and  
 predicate of the proposition which affirms, that I am  
 writing. This certainty or truth of the thing is no  
 " *medium distinct from the thing*" or fact " *itself*, by  
 " *which it renders itself evident to the divine knowl-*  
 " *edge*;" but it is the real existence of the very thing or  
 fact.—Again, it is to all Christians a real and cer-  
 tain futurity and truth, that Jesus Christ will judge in  
 righteousness. But the truth and certainty of this fu-  
 ture event is not a *medium* distinct from the futu-  
 rity of the event itself, by which it renders itself ev-  
 ident to the divine mind; but it is the real and infal-  
 lible futurity of the event itself and consists in the firm  
 and infallible connection between the subject and  
 predicate of the proposition which affirms the futurity  
 of the event. Now will Dr. West pretend, that there  
 is



is no truth or no firm and infallible connection between the subject and predicate of the proposition, that *I am now writing*, which is the foundation of the divine knowledge of that event? If this were so, real truth and fact would not be the foundation, rule or object of the divine knowledge; but God might indifferently know truth to be falsehood and falsehood truth.

Or if by "the medium by which things render themselves evident," the Doctor mean *the truth and reality of things*; I grant that what ever is known whether to God or creatures, is known by this medium; and this is true of the most self-evident propositions and of the most independent and underived knowledge. But to call this *a medium* of knowledge is a perversion of language. Surely truth is not the medium by which itself is known.

Dr. West himself notwithstanding his abundant labour "to show, that infallible foreknowledge in the Deity does not prove, that events take place in consequence of an antecedent necessity;" fully and frequently grants all that we maintain. Thus, p. 37. "That the Deity does perfectly discern all connections between subjects and predicates ——— is readily granted." Now this implies, that the said subjects and predicates are really and in themselves connected, and in order of nature before that connection is discerned. This real and certain connection is the certainty or certain truth of things themselves, of which we have been speaking; and which with regard to moral events and actions is moral necessity. P. 41. "The future volitions of moral agents are so infallibly and indissolubly connected with the divine foreknowledge, which has had existence from all eternity, that it is impossible, that the Deity should be deceived; and therefore all these volitions will most certainly take place." P. 46. "There may be a certainty ——— that such a thing will take place," speaking of an human action. But certainty with regard



gard to moral actions is moral necessity, and if all volitions foreknown by God will *certainly* take place, they will take place by moral necessity.—P. 52. “All things from eternity to eternity being present to the divine mind, *he sees all things as they are.*” Therefore if he see some events as certainly future, they are certainly future; for he sees them as they are. And this certain futurity is the object of the divine knowledge, and in the order of nature is antecedent to it, as really as the existence of this paper, on which I am writing, is in the order of nature antecedent to my sight of it. But this antecedent certain futurity of any moral action, is antecedent moral necessity. Therefore as all moral actions are *foreknown* by God in consequence of an antecedent moral necessity, much more do they *come into existence* in consequence of such an antecedent necessity.—P. 53. “Deity would from all eternity have infallibly foreknown this proposition, *as a certain truth,*” viz. the proposition concerning Peter and Judas denying and betraying their Lord. It seems then that whatever proposition concerning a future event is infallibly foreknown by God, is foreknown as a certain and infallible truth; or which is the same thing, it is known, as an infallible truth, that the event will come to pass; and therefore it is a certain and infallible truth antecedently in the order of nature to the knowledge of it; and therefore the event being a moral act, was morally necessary antecedently to the foreknowledge, and much more antecedently to the event itself.—P. 52. “This necessity being only a consequence founded upon *the certainty of the thing* foreknown.” Thus notwithstanding all Dr. West’s clamour against President Edwards, because he had spoken of a *certainty in things themselves*, he himself here expressly holds the very same. And will Dr. West deny, that this “certainty of the thing foreknown” is the ground of the divine foreknowledge of that thing, in the same sense, that my present  
K existence



existence is the ground of the divine knowledge, that I exist? If this be not denied, it cannot be denied, that certainty or moral necessity is in order of nature antecedent to the foreknowledge, and much more antecedent to the existence, of a moral action.

Dr. West will not deny, that any future event foreknown by God, will certainly come to pass. Then there is a certainty, or it is an infallible truth, that every such event will come to pass, and this certainty now exists antecedently to the existence of the event. But this certainty with regard to moral events, is moral necessity. Therefore there is a necessity of the existence of all events divinely foreknown, and this necessity is antecedent to the existence of the events. Thus, mere foreknowledge is an infallible proof of antecedent necessity.

“ We frequently say, It is a pity such a person did  
 “ so ; there was no occasion for it ; he might easily  
 “ have omitted the doing of the thing in the time of  
 “ it, if he would. Why may we not as well say, A  
 “ man *will certainly* do a particular thing, though he  
 “ will have power to forbear doing it? There could  
 “ not be the least appearance of absurdity or contra-  
 “ diction in speaking in this manner about a future  
 “ action, any more than about a past action, were it  
 “ not for the great difficulty or supposed impossibility  
 “ of conceiving how a thing can be foreknown, un-  
 “ less it be connected with something that now ex-  
 “ ists ; that is, a thing cannot be foreknown, unless  
 “ there is a medium, which has a present existence.”

P. 30.—On this passage I remark,

1. Here again Dr. West holds that certainty in things, which he so abundantly reprobates in President Edwards. He says, “ a man *will certainly* do a particular thing ;” and he doubtless means, that it is a certain futurity, the event itself is certain, or it is a certain and infallible truth, that the man will do the thing ; and not merely that this truth is known, whether by God or creature. Truth is truth wheth-



er known or not : And this infallible truth is the very certainty in the things themselves, of which President Edwards speaks.

2. What does Dr. West mean, when he says, "He might easily have omitted the doing of the thing, if he would?" Suppose the thing done was an *internal* act, a volition to go to a debauch : In what sense does Dr. West mean, that the man could have avoided this volition, *if he would* ? Does he mean, that if he had not had the volition, he would not have had it ? This is an undoubted truth, but does not disprove the necessity of it. If God had not always spoken the truth, he would not have spoken the truth. But it does not hence follow, that God does not always necessarily speak the truth, when he speaks at all, or that he can lie. If there had been no God, there would indeed have been no God ; but does it hence follow, that the divine existence is not necessary ?——To say, that if a man had chosen not to go to a debauch, he would indeed have chosen not to go to it, is too great trifling to be imputed to Dr. West. Yet to say, that the man could have avoided the *external action* of going to the debauch, if he would, would be equal trifling ; for the question before us is concerning the liberty of the *will* or *mind* and not of the body.——On the whole, we have before us one of Dr. West's *things hard to be understood*, and we must wait for an explanation.

3. When we say concerning any past action of a man, "There was no occasion for it ; he might easily have omitted the doing of the thing in the time of it, if he would ;" if we mean, that there was no antecedent certainty, that he would perform that action, we mean a falsehood. That action was as much from eternity the object of the divine omniscience, as any action which is now future ; therefore the certainty of its then future existence preceded its actual existence. And this certainty was as fixed, unalterable and indefeasible, as the divine foreknowledge or the



divine decree. The foreknowledge and decree of God imply no other kind or degree of necessity, than the aforesaid absolute certainty. A futurity that is absolutely certain is implied in the divine foreknowledge; and the addition of a decree cannot increase that certainty.

4. When we say, A person might easily have omitted a certain past action, in the time of it, if he would; we commonly mean, that he was under no compulsion or coercion, or no *natural* necessity; and that he had a *natural power* to omit the action. This undoubtedly every man has with regard to every voluntary action, and this however that action be foreknown or decreed by God. Though Judas betrayed his Master, "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" yet he was under no *natural* necessity to betray him, but had a full *natural power* to do otherwise. Now Dr. West reconciles foreknowledge with liberty, on the ground that we have still a *physical* or *natural power* to do otherwise. On the same ground we may reconcile absolute decrees with liberty.

5. In the same sense "we may as well say, Such a man will *certainly* do a particular thing, though he will have power to forbear the doing of it." He may doubtless have a *natural power* to forbear; still this does not at all diminish the *certain futurity* of the action; and that whether the action be foreknown only, or foreknown and decreed. And a *natural power* is all the power, which the man will have to forbear the action. Any power opposed to moral necessity or the certain futurity of the action, would imply that it is uncertain, whether he will perform that action; which is contrary to the supposition made by Dr. West, "that the man *will certainly* do the thing."

6. As to "the great difficulty or supposed impossibility of conceiving, *how* a thing can be foreknown, unless it be connected with something that now exists;" this is needlessly brought in here. In this part of the argument



argument we are under no necessity of inquiring or showing *how* God foreknows future events, but may, so far as relates to the certain futurity of all events foreknown by God and the antecedency of that certainty to the existence of the events, allow, that God foreknows future events in the independent and undervived manner, which Dr. West maintains. This would equally imply a certainty antecedent to the existence of the events foreknown, as a foreknowledge founded on a decree would imply it. Dr. West's account of the divine foreknowledge implies, as I have shown, all that certainty or necessity, for which we plead. Beside what has been already said to show this, I add, that Dr. West grants, that foreknowledge has no causal influence to bring things into existence, or to make their existence more certain, than it would be without foreknowledge. "I suppose it will be readily granted on all sides, that even the divine foreknowledge itself has no influence or causal force, with regard to the thing foreknown, either to bring it into existence or to hinder its happening; but that all things would take place just in the same manner, if they were not foreknown, as they do now;" p. 45. Dr. West also grants, that all future events are foreknown by God, and that all things which are foreknown by him, will certainly and infallibly come to pass. Now as this certainty is not caused by foreknowledge, it must exist independently of it. And as God sees all things as they are; therefore when he sees them to be certainly future, they are certainly future; and this certain futurity, which is the object of the divine knowledge, existed in the order of nature antecedently to the divine knowledge, and much more antecedently to the actual existence of the events themselves. Otherwise God would see events to be certainly future, while they are not certainly future.

"The obvious reason," says Dr. West, p. 31, "why we cannot know things but only by intuition



“or proof, is because all our knowledge is entirely *ab extra*.” And does the Doctor believe, that if part of our knowledge were not *ab extra*, we should know some things neither by intuition nor by proof? Whatever is known by intuition is self-evident; and whatever is known by proof, is evident by the medium of something else. And whatever is known at all, is either evident by itself immediately, or is evident by something else mediately. Therefore Dr. West, in supposing, that if our knowledge were not all *ab extra*, we should know some things neither by intuition nor by proof, supposes that some things would be evident to us, neither immediately nor mediately, neither by themselves nor by any thing else: And what kind of a source of knowledge we should then have, I leave the Doctor to explain.

“If previous certainty in things themselves means nothing distinct from the things themselves, then all that can be meant by this previous certainty in things themselves, upon which the divine knowledge is founded, is only this, that the Deity cannot know that things will exist, which he knows never will exist. And therefore to say, that there is a previous certainty in things themselves, upon which the divine knowledge is founded, is only saying in other words, that the divine knowledge is founded on the divine knowledge;” p. 34. By certainty in things themselves I have already explained myself to mean the *truth* and *reality* of things themselves, or the truth of the proposition which asserts their existence or relation: And *previous* certainty of things themselves means nothing different from the truth of the proposition, which asserts their future existence, or its being a real truth, that those things will exist. Now, whether to say, that the divine foreknowledge of an event, is founded on the truth, that the event will come into existence, be the same as to say, “that the divine foreknowledge is founded on the divine foreknowledge,” I am willing any candid person should judge.

The



The Doctor says, p. 34, "That knowledge in the Deity must mean the same thing with certainty." No doubt knowledge in the Deity is the same thing with *subjective* certainty or certain knowledge; but it is not the same with *objective* certainty, or the truth which is the object of the divine knowledge.

The Doctor grants, p. 41, "That the future volitions of moral agents are so infallibly and indissolubly connected with the divine foreknowledge, which has had existence from all eternity, that it is impossible, that the Deity should be deceived; and therefore these volitions will most *certainly* take place. For by *necessary* here he" [President Edwards] "can ——— mean nothing distinct from *infallible certainty*. But how does their being necessarily in this sense, *i. e. infallibly certain*, prove that the volitions of moral agents are effects produced by an *extrinsic* cause."—Undoubtedly by necessity in this case President Edwards means nothing distinct from infallible certainty. This is the very thing which he abundantly declares himself to mean. "And as the divine foreknowledge," by Dr. West's concession, "has had existence from eternity;" and as "the volitions of moral agents are indissolubly connected with that foreknowledge," and "those volitions will most certainly take place;" of course there was an infallible eternal certainty, that all human volitions would come into existence just as they do exist, and Dr. West grants all that we hold on this head. What then becomes of liberty *to either side, to act or not act*? For instance, it is now divinely foreknown, that Gog and Magog will rise and compass the camp of the saints. Therefore when Gog and Magog shall come into existence, they will no more have a liberty *to act or not act*, as to this instance of their conduct, than they would have, on the supposition that the same conduct were decreed.—It is true, there would be this difference in the cases, that the decree would *cause* the certain futurity of that conduct, but the



foreknowledge would not *cause* it : Nor is it of any importance as to liberty, by whom or by what this certain futurity is caused, or whether it be without cause. If a prison when built, be no obstruction to liberty, then the agency of the mason and carpenter who built it was nothing opposed to liberty. So if *certain futurity*, when established, be not inconsistent with liberty ; then the divine decree, by which it is established, is not inconsistent with liberty.

If it should be said, that God foresees, that *Gog* and *Magog* will influence themselves to the conduct just now mentioned ; be it so ; then it is now infallibly certain, that *Gog* and *Magog* will influence themselves to that conduct. Where then is their liberty to act or not act ? It is not left loose and undetermined, whether they shall influence themselves to that conduct ; but it is previously certain, that they will influence themselves to it.

The Doctor in the last quotation, asks, “ How does their being infallibly certain, prove that the volitions of moral agents are effects produced by an *extrinsic* cause ? ” — Suppose they are not effects of an *extrinsic* cause, but are effected by the subject of those volitions, if that were possible ; yet if it be previously and from all eternity certain, that the subject will produce these volitions in himself ; still there is no *liberty to either side, to act or not act* ; but he is limited to produce in himself those very definite volitions, which are divinely foreseen, and therefore he is confined to *one side*, is confined to *act* and that definitely.

Or suppose these volitions are produced by no cause whatever, then God foresees that they are about to happen absolutely without cause and by mere chance ; still there is in this case no liberty to either side, but the volitions are without cause confined to one side only.

It is abundantly pleaded by Dr. West and others, that the circumstance that the divine foreknowledge is not the efficient cause of human volitions, renders that



that foreknowledge entirely consistent with their idea of liberty, even as the divine knowledge of a volition in present existence is consistent with the liberty of that volition.—If by liberty in this case they mean self-determination or the causation of volition by the subject himself; I grant, that the most absolute foreknowledge is perfectly consistent with this idea of liberty: And so is an absolute decree as consistent with it. If God were absolutely to decree, that a particular man shall cause in himself a particular volition, the man would accordingly cause that volition in himself, and therefore according to the definition of liberty now given, he would be free.—But if by liberty in this case be meant, what the writers to whom I am opposed, call a *liberty to either side*, and a *power to act or not act*, as opposed to moral necessity; the divine foreknowledge of a volition is utterly inconsistent with the liberty of that volition. For according to this definition, liberty implies, that the volition is not fixed or determined, and therefore it is uncertain what it will be, or whether it will be at all. But divine foreknowledge implies, that it is absolutely certain, that a volition foreknown will be, and what it will be, as Dr. West grants.

The circumstance, that foreknowledge does not efficiently *cause* an event to be certainly future, is nothing to the present purpose. We are not now inquiring what *causes* an event to be certainly future, but whether it *be* certainly future. If it be certainly future it is necessary, in the sense in which we use the word *necessity*, let what will be the cause of that futurity, or if the futurity be uncaused. Divine prophecy is not the cause of the futurity of the event foretold, yet no man will say, that it does not prove the certain futurity of that event. But prophecy no more implies or proves the certain futurity of the event foretold, than the divine foreknowledge implies and proves the certain futurity of the event foreknown.—

To say, that a divine decree is inconsistent with liberty,



ty, because it *makes* the action certainly future, when the certain futurity itself is allowed to be consistent with liberty, is very strange! What if it does make it certainly future? That certain futurity, when made, is not inconsistent with liberty. So long as this is granted, to hold that the divine decree as making or producing that certain futurity is inconsistent with liberty, is as absurd as to grant that a free circulation of the fluids in the animal constitution is consistent with health; and yet to hold, that exercise *as producing* and merely because it produces that free circulation, is inconsistent with health.

I grant, that divine foreknowledge is as consistent with liberty, as the divine knowledge of a present volition is. If by liberty be meant the causation of volition by the subject, God may undoubtedly as well foresee this, as see it present. But if by liberty be meant a liberty to either side, a liberty to act or not act, as opposed to moral necessity; since this implies, with regard to an act now in existence, uncertainty whether the act does exist, and with regard to a future act, uncertainty in the nature of things and in the divine mind, whether it will exist; I say, no such uncertainty is or can be with regard either to an act seen by God to be now in existence, or an act divinely foreseen. As therefore the divine knowledge of the present existence of an act, is utterly inconsistent with this kind of liberty in that act; we need not and we do not pretend, that the divine foreknowledge of an act is more inconsistent with the same kind of liberty in the act foreknown.—There is this difference however in the cases; knowledge of a present act does not imply, that the act was certain *previously* to its existence. But the foreknowledge of an act does imply this. This difference ought carefully to be noticed, or we shall run into great error. If, when it is said, that foreknowledge no more proves a necessity of the act foreknown, than the knowledge of an act at present existing, proves the necessity of this



this act, the meaning be, that foreknowledge no more proves, that the future act foreknown is certainly future *previously* to the existence of it, than the knowledge of a present act proves, that this act was certainly future *previously* to its existence; the truth of this proposition is by no means allowed. Foreknowledge by the very term respects a future event; of course the foreknowledge exists before the event. And as it is granted on all hands, that foreknowledge implies a certainty of the event foreknown; it follows, that there is a certainty of the future existence of every event foreknown, and this certainty is previous to the existence of the event. But the knowledge of a present event may not exist before the event itself; if it does, it is then *foreknowledge*. And as it does not, so far as it is the bare knowledge of a present event, exist before the event; it does not imply a *previous* certainty, that the event would come into existence.

My seeing a man perform an action does not prove, that it was certain beforehand, that he could perform it. But if a prophet under inspiration see, that a man will tomorrow perform a certain action, this does prove, that it is beforehand certain, that he will perform it. And surely the foresight of a prophet no more proves this, than the foreknowledge of God.— Suppose the act foreknown by God, is about to be self-originated, still it is as necessary or certain beforehand, as if it were not to be self-originated; because the foreknowledge is from eternity and therefore precedes the existence of the act out of the divine mind. For though all things are always present *in the divine mind*; yet all things are not always in present existence *out of the divine mind*, any more than all creatures existed from eternity.— Be it so, that in the divine foreknowledge all things are present; then all human volitions are from eternity as fixed and certain, as if they existed from eternity not only in the divine mind, but out of the divine mind, and are as incapable of not existing, as the divine mind is incapable of delusion or error.

“ Bare



“ Bare *certainty*, that an agent will do such a thing,  
 “ does not imply in it, that he had not in himself a  
 “ *power* to refrain from doing it ;” p. 45. This de-  
 pends on the meaning of the word *power* to refrain.  
 If this mean *natural* power, as it has been explained,  
 it is granted, that ever so great certainty and even a  
 divine absolute decree, that an agent shall do such a  
 thing, does not imply in it, that he has not in himself  
 a power to refrain from doing it. But if by *power*  
 to refrain be meant *moral* power, or a power opposite  
 to moral necessity, which is the bare certainty of a  
 moral action, it is absurd and self-contradictory to  
 say, that the bare certainty that an agent will do such  
 a thing, does not imply in it, that he has not a power  
 to refrain from doing it. It is the very same absurd-  
 ity and contradiction, as to say, that a bare certainty,  
 that an agent will do such a particular thing, does not  
 imply in it a certainty, that he will do it.

In the same page the Doctor tells us, “ The only  
 “ question is, whether supposing it to be foreknown,  
 “ that an agent will conduct in such a manner, at  
 “ such a time, it will be any contradiction to affirm,  
 “ that the said agent will have a power, at the same  
 “ time, to act in a different manner.” If it be fore-  
 known, that an agent will act in a particular manner,  
 at a particular time ; it will be granted, that there is  
 a certainty, that he will act in that particular. But  
 certainty of moral action is *moral necessity*, and moral  
 inability of the contrary. And to assert, that an agent  
 is under a moral inability to act in a different man-  
 ner, and yet has a moral power to act in a different  
 manner, is a direct contradiction.

The Doctor says, p. 29, “ That infallible fore-  
 “ knowledge in the Deity does not prove, that events  
 “ take place in consequence of an antecedent or pre-  
 “ vious necessity ; that it only proves a *logical* neces-  
 “ sity or a necessity of consequence ; i. e. it being cer-  
 “ tain, that a thing will take place, it follows, that to  
 “ assert that it will not take place, must be false and  
 “ cannot



“cannot be true.”—As the Doctor makes much of this, which he calls a *logical necessity*, or a *necessity of consequence*, let us examine it.

The foreknowledge of God is here said to prove a logical necessity only, or a necessity of consequence; which is said to be this, that “it being certain, that a thing will take place, it follows, that to assert that it will not take place, must be false and cannot be true.” Here one thing is said to follow from another, by a logical necessity or a necessity of consequence. Let us take an example: It is a certain truth that the dead will rise; and does it hence follow, that it is a falsehood, that the dead will not rise? No, the latter is no more a consequence from the former, than the former is a consequence from the latter; or than that twice two are not unequal to four, is a consequence from this proposition, that twice two are equal to four; or than from its being true, that a thing is, it follows as a consequence that it is not true, that it is not. The one is no consequence from the other, but is precisely the same thing expressed in different words, which convey the very same idea. You might as well say, that if a man be *kind*, it follows as a consequence, that he is *benevolent*; or that if a man be *busy*, it follows as a consequence, that he is employed in *business*. Thus we may argue and draw consequences all day long, yet make no more progress, than the soldier who marches without gaining ground.

Dr. West says, p. 32, “No necessity is implied in divine prescience, except merely a logical one; but this ——— is in the nature of things *subsequent* to the infallible foreknowledge of the existence of the thing foreknown.” But does Dr. West mean, that in foreknowledge God foresees an event as uncertain, and that in consequence of this foresight the event becomes certain? Surely the Doctor did not well consider the subject, if this be his meaning. To foreknow is certainly to foresee: And certainly to foresee, is to see a future event as certainly about to be.

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This certainty of its futurity is supposed and implied in foreknowledge, and is not the *consequence* of it. Dr. West says, "It will be readily granted on all sides, that even the divine foreknowledge itself has no influence nor causal force, with regard to the thing foreknown, either to bring it into existence, or to hinder its happening." Therefore it has no influence to make its existence certain or necessary; how then is the necessity *subsequent* to foreknowledge? The certainty of its existence is *antecedent* in the order of nature to the foreknowledge, and is the ground or the object of it. This also is abundantly implied in various passages of Dr. West's book, as has been shown above. In p. 53, the Doctor speaks of his logical necessity as "only a *consequence* founded upon the certainty of the thing foreknown." But this certainty of moral actions is the very moral necessity, for which we plead. If the Doctor mean this by his logical necessity, it is presumed, that the reader sees the absurdity of saying, that this necessity is *consequent* on the divine foreknowledge; and also the absurdity of saying that it is *founded on* the certainty of the thing foreknown. A thing is not consequent on itself nor on that which is founded on itself, as foreknowledge is founded on the certainty of the thing foreknown. If the Doctor mean any thing else by his logical necessity, I wish to be informed how he means any thing to the purpose of opposing that moral necessity of human actions, which President Edwards had advanced, and by which he explained himself to mean the certainty of moral actions. A logical necessity consequent on that certainty is a different thing from the certainty itself.

But allowing, what Dr. West holds, That foreknowledge proves a necessity consequential to foreknowledge; this necessity would be as inconsistent with liberty, as one that is antecedent to foreknowledge; because the necessity would exist antecedently to the actions of creatures, as it follows immediately from foreknowledge.



The Doctor, in his Second Part, p. 92, says, "Mr. Edwards had raised a spectre, which he could not lay. With him necessity was necessity; and with him it was all one, whether the necessity was previous to the thing in question, or a consequence drawn from the supposition of its having taken place." This is an injurious representation. The necessity for which President Edwards pleads, is "previous to the thing in question," and he never pleads for a necessity which is "a consequence drawn from the mere supposition of its having taken place." The necessity for which he pleads, is that which is implied in divine foreknowledge; and as this exists before the event foreknown, so the necessity which is implied in it and proved by it, is also previous to that event, and does not follow or begin to exist in consequence even of that foreknowledge, and much less in consequence of the supposition, that the thing foreknown has taken place. The only thing, so far as I know, which could give occasion for this representation by Dr. West is, that President Edwards calls this necessity *a necessity of consequence*, and says, that a thing necessary in its own nature, or one that has already come into existence, being supposed, another thing necessarily connected with either of the former, and the necessity of whose existence is in question, certainly follows; *i. e.* the necessity of this last thing certainly follows from the existence or supposition of the existence, of either of the former. For instance, when the divine decree or foreknowledge of an event is supposed, the existence of the event decreed or foreknown will certainly follow. But the necessity, which Dr. West injuriously imputes to President Edwards, is not the necessary existence of *one thing*, implied in the supposed existence of *another*; but the necessary existence of *one and the same thing*, so long as it is supposed to exist; and this necessary existence amounts to no more than the mere identical, trifling proposition, that *what is, is*. Of such trifling President Edwards was incapable,



pable, and the implicit imputation, that he has written an octavo volume in support of a proposition so insignificant, ought either never to have been made, or to have been better supported, than by mere assertion.

In the latter part of his third essay, the Doctor has spent a number of pages to show, that a certainty that a man will perform particular actions does not imply that he is under a necessity of performing them, or that he has no power to avoid them. But all this is labour lost, and is easily answered by making the distinction between natural and moral inability; or it all depends on the ambiguity of words and is mere logomachy.

Dr. Clarke endeavours to evade the argument for moral necessity drawn from the divine foreknowledge, by saying, that foreknowledge no more implies necessity, than the truth of a proposition asserting some future event implies necessity. This may be granted. If a proposition asserting some future event, be a real and absolute truth, there is an absolute certainty of the event; such absolute certainty is all that is implied in the divine foreknowledge; and all the moral necessity for which we plead. And though this certainty is consistent with a physical or natural ability to do otherwise, it is not consistent with the contingency or uncertainty of the event. So that there is no liberty of contingency in the case, no liberty to either side, to act or not act, no liberty inconsistent with previous certainty of moral action, which is moral necessity.

Dr. West strenuously opposes the doctrine, that the divine decrees are the foundation of God's foreknowledge. As I have already observed, this question seems to be foreign from the dispute concerning liberty; therefore I do not wish to bring it in here; otherwise I should have no objection to entering on the discussion of it. But suppose the contrary were true, that foreknowledge is the foundation of decrees;



I presume it would be granted, that decrees immediately follow foreknowledge. Therefore all events are decreed before they come to pass. And as decrees establish, or imply an establishment of the events decreed, and this antecedently to their existence; therefore on this plan there is an absolute certainty of all events and moral actions, and that antecedently to the existence of those actions; because they are all absolutely decreed by God immediately on his foreknowledge of them and before they come into existence.

“If this does not imply, that foreknowledge is not an essential attribute, I am under a great mistake;” p. 35. Be it so, that Dr. West is under a great mistake; what follows? Is it impossible, that he should be under a great mistake? If foreknowledge be an essential attribute, it doubtless exists antecedently to human actions, and therefore implies a certainty of them antecedent to their existence. The truth is, that the foreknowledge of any particular event is no more an essential attribute of God, than the knowledge of any present or past event. Knowledge in general is an essential attribute; but any particular perception of the divine mind is no more an essential attribute, than any particular act of the divine will, or any one decree of God. Will in general is an essential attribute; but Dr. West will not pretend, that every act of the divine will is an essential attribute. Or if it be, doubtless every instance of foreknowledge is an essential attribute. By the same argument by which Dr. West proves, that according to our ideas of decrees and foreknowledge, knowledge is not an essential attribute; it may be proved, that according to Dr. West’s ideas of those subjects, will is not an essential attribute of God. The Doctor, p. 36, tells us, “That the divine determinations are the Deity decreeing and willing;” *i. e.* they are the will of God. But according to him the divine determinations or decrees are founded on foreknowledge. There-



fore the divine will is founded on God's foreknowledge and is not an essential attribute of God, but is self-created, or a creature of the divine understanding.

The advocates for liberty to act or not act, "pretend not to be able to solve the difficulty arising from divine prescience." This is an honest confession. Yet with this acknowledged insuperable difficulty attending this favourite doctrine, they are determined to adhere to it. This confession Dr. Price in particular makes in the following words; "The foreknowledge of a contingent event carrying the appearance of a contradiction, is indeed a difficulty; and I do not pretend to be capable of removing it." Correspondence with Priestley, p. 175.—If this be a sufficient apology for holding a doctrine, which cannot be reconciled with an acknowledged truth, it will be easy to apologize for holding any doctrine whatever; *e. g.* the doctrine of transubstantiation. It is only necessary to say, "That a body should be turned into flesh, and yet retain all the sensible qualities of bread, as it carries the appearance of a contradiction, is indeed a difficulty; and we do not pretend to be capable of removing it."

Dr. West holds, p. 53, that what is foreknown by God, is *eternal truth*; yet, p. 33, he holds, that "there is no antecedent certainty in things themselves, on which divine prescience is founded:" *i. e.* God knows a proposition to be a certain truth, before it is a certain truth, and after his knowledge of it, it becomes a certain and eternal truth; yet the divine knowledge has no causal influence to make it a truth.—He strenuously opposes the idea, that human moral actions are certainly future antecedently to the divine foreknowledge of them; at the same time, he grants, that they are not *made* certainly future by the divine foreknowledge; and yet holds, that as foreknown by God, they are *eternal truths*. If they be eternal truths, doubtless the propositions which assert them, were certainly true from eternity, and therefore in the divine foreknowledge of them God perceived that eternal



nal truth and certainty, and that certainty was the object and so the ground of the divine foreknowledge, and therefore there was "an antecedent certainty in things themselves, on which the divine prescience is founded."—Besides, as the Doctor grants that foreknowledge has no influence to cause that certainty, I ask, By what is it caused? Is it caused by nothing? According to the Doctor the certain futurity of the things foreknown by God, does not exist antecedently to foreknowledge, and is not caused by it; yet it exists from eternity; and it is that very eternal truth which there is in all things foreknown by God.

In page 45, he grants, "that all things would take place just in the same manner, if they were not foreknown, as they do now." Then all things and all events are fixed and established independently of foreknowledge and antecedently to it, and were independently of foreknowledge certainly about to be. With what consistency then does Dr. West deny a certainty in things themselves antecedent to foreknowledge. And on what ground can he oppose the doctrine of divine decrees, which represents those decrees as antecedent in the order of nature to foreknowledge?

If God from all eternity knew events to be future, they were future, and future in the order of nature before foreknowledge, and were future by the divine agency or by the agency of some other cause, or of no cause at all. If they were future by the agency of God, that is all that the doctrine of absolute decrees implies. If they were future by the agency of any other cause, this supposes another eternal cause. If they were future by no cause, they may and will come into existence by no cause; which is absurd. To imagine, that they are from eternity future by the agency of human free will, is to suppose, that human free will either existed from eternity, or could and did produce effects eternal ages before it existed.

It is said, that there is properly no foreknowledge in God, that all his knowledge is present knowledge.



and that past, present and future, are now all present in the divine mind.—Still God does not view all *possible* things as present. The *existence* of some things is present to God ; only the possibility of other things is present to him. Whence arises this difference ? What gives some things a present existence in the divine mind, when other things have only a possible existence in the same mind ? This difference is an effect ; otherwise all real existences and events are necessary existences, or those which are not necessary, become future, and finally come into existence, with a cause. The difference between possible and future volitions cannot be the effect of the mind of the creature ; because it existed before that mind existed.

By all things being present in the divine mind, is meant not that God now sees them to be present to creatures and in their view ; but that his view of all things, so far as relates to himself, is the same as it will be, when they shall have come into existence in the view of creatures. He sees them not to be in existence as to us, but sees their existence to be as to us future. And this is all that we mean by foreknowledge. So that saying, that all knowledge in God is present knowledge, does not show, that there is no foreknowledge in him. A knowledge of things as future with respect to creatures, is foreknowledge : And the whole objection, that the divine knowledge is all present knowledge, is founded on the ambiguity of words, or of the phrase, *all things are present in the divine mind*, or this, that, *all the divine knowledge is present knowledge*. If the meaning of that phrase be, that God sees now, that certain things will at some future time be in existence in the view of creatures ; this is granted on all hands ; and what follows from it ? Surely not that there is no certainty previous to the existence of those things in the view of creatures, that they will thus be in existence ; but, that there is such a certainty. Therefore in this sense of the phrase it is not at all opposed to, but implies the doctrine of previous certainty  
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and moral necessity, which we maintain. If that phrase mean, that God now sees all events, which ever take place, to have a present existence in the view of creatures; this is not true and will not be pretended by our opponents. Yet this is the only sense of the phrase, which opposes the doctrine of previous certainty as argued from the divine foreknowledge. That all things are present in the divine mind, can mean no more, than that all things are now seen by God, and that there is no past nor future with him. Still he views some things to be past, and other things to be future, with respect to creatures: And his view of some things as future with respect to creatures, is what we mean by the divine foreknowledge; not that he views things as future with respect to himself. If therefore God now sees, that certain volitions will hereafter take place in the minds of *Gog* and *Magog*, according to prophecy, they will *certainly* take place, and there is a moral necessity of it, and a moral necessity *now existing* ages before those volitions will have an existence in the minds of those men. The consideration, that all things are present with God, does, as before observed, not at all prove, that there is not now a previous certainty or moral necessity, that those volitions will come into existence; but evidently proves that there is such certainty, and that in two respects; (1.) A certainty previous in order of time to the existence of those volitions in the minds of *Gog* and *Magog*. (2.) A certainty previous in the order of nature to the divine foreknowledge itself, and which is the foundation of that foreknowledge.

Most or all the objections brought against moral necessity, may be brought with equal force against divine foreknowledge. For example; "If there be an absolute moral necessity, that John go on in sin, and be finally damned, there is no possibility that he be saved. Then why should he or any other person use any endeavours toward his salvation?"—If there be force in this objection, it is equally forcible against



divine foreknowledge : Thus, If God foreknow, that John will go on in sin and be finally damned, there is an absolute certainty or moral necessity of it. Therefore there is no possibility of John's salvation ; and why should he or any other person put forth any endeavours toward it? This and all objections of the kind imply, that all moral events are left in a state of perfect uncertainty, till they come to pass, that they come to pass by mere chance, and that they are not, and cannot possibly be, the objects of foreknowledge.

It has been already observed, that though divine foreknowledge is not the efficient cause of the certain futurity of any event ; yet it implies, that the event is certainly future, and this certainty, let it be caused by what it will, or though it be uncaused, is with respect to a moral event, moral necessity, and equally consistent or inconsistent with liberty, as if it were caused by foreknowledge. I now observe further, that this certain futurity undoubtedly is caused *by something*. It is equally absurd to imagine, that an event may become *future* without a cause, as that it may come *into existence* without a cause. Certain futurity implies, that the actual existence of the event is secured to take place in due time. And whatever is able thus to secure the event, is able to bring it into existence. If it may be secured without a cause, it may be brought into existence without a cause. This certain futurity of all events from eternity is an effect, and cannot be the effect of any creature, because no creature existed from eternity. It must therefore be the effect of the Creator, who alone existed from eternity, and who alone therefore could from eternity give futurity to any event.

Therefore however frightened Dr. West and other writers be at the idea, that moral actions should be the effect of a cause extrinsic to the subject of those actions, we seem to be necessitated to give into this idea, from the consideration, that all moral actions of creatures were from eternity foreknown and therefore were certainly future. This eternal futurity must be  
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an effect of a cause extrinsic to all creatures. This extrinsic cause secures their existence, and in due time actually brings them into existence.

It is said, that God knows all things from eternity, as we know things presently existing before our eyes. Now the actual existence of things out of our minds is the foundation of our knowledge in the case. But it will not be said, that all things existed from eternity out of the divine mind, and that this existence of them is the foundation of the divine eternal knowledge of them or of their existence in the divine mind. If they did eternally exist out of the divine mind, they were necessarily existent in the same sense in which God is; and consequently none of our actions are caused by ourselves or by our self-determining power: They are as uncaused, as necessary and as eternal, as the divine existence.

Dr. Clarke in his remarks on Collins, p. 39, says, that "in the argument drawn against liberty from the divine prescience, or power of judging infallibly concerning free events, it must be proved, that things otherwise supposed free, will thereby unavoidably become necessary." On this I remark, (1.) That if by the word *free* the Doctor mean any thing opposite to the most absolute moral necessity, he must mean *contingent, uncertain, not certainly future*. But nothing is in this sense supposed, or allowed, to be free.—(2.) We do not pretend from the divine prescience to prove, that "thereby things unavoidably become necessary," or certainly future. But we do pretend from prescience to prove, that all events *were* certainly future, in the order of nature, antecedently to the prescience; and that they are certainly future, in the order of time, antecedently to their existence.

Dr. Clarke in his *Being and Attributes*, p. 95, &c. grants, that all things are and were certain from eternity, and yet supposes, p. 97, that an universal fatality would be inconsistent with morality. But it seems,



that according to the Doctor an universal and eternal certainty of all things is not inconsistent with morality ; and if by fatality he meant any thing different from certainty, he opposes what nobody holds.— Ibid, p. 98, the Doctor says, “ mere certainty of event does not imply necessity.” But mere certainty of event doubtless implies itself, and that is all the necessity, for which we plead. The Doctor’s argument to prove, that certainty does not imply necessity, is, that foreknowledge implies no more certainty, than would exist without it. At the same time he grants, that there is “ the same certainty of event in every one of man’s actions, as if they were never so fatal and necessary.” Now any other certainty or necessity than this we do not pretend to be implied in foreknowledge. And as the Doctor himself grants this necessity to exist, whether there be or be not foreknowledge ; then in either case all that necessity, for which we plead, is granted to exist.

Dr. West, in p. 20, 21, Part II, thinks President Edwards inconsistent with himself, in denying, that the divine decrees are founded on foreknowledge, and yet holding, that “ the perfection of his understanding “ is the foundation of his decrees.” The Doctor argues, that “ If foreknowledge in the Deity, is part of “ the perfection of the divine understanding. Then is it “ the foundation of his wise purposes and decrees ; “ and so his objection lies just as strong against him, “ as against us.” Doubtless the perfection of the divine understanding ; *i. e.* God’s perfect view of the fitness of certain things to certain uses and ends, is the reason why he decrees and appoints those things to those uses and ends. But this is very different from supposing that foreknowledge is the foundation of decrees, and that God first foresees certain events about to take place, and then decrees to permit them to take place. And the inconclusiveness of Dr. West’s argument just quoted, may appear thus ; If after-knowledge, or a knowledge, that events have taken place, be a part of



of the divine understanding ; then it is the foundation of his wise purposes and decrees. But it will not be pretended, that the consequent in this case justly follows from the antecedent. Yet it follows as justly as in the argument of the Doctor. Not every perception which belongs to the divine understanding is the foundation of God's decrees universally or generally : Beside the instance already mentioned, I might mention God's perfect knowledge of geometry, mechanics, &c. The divine perfect knowledge of those sciences is not the foundation of all God's decrees : No more is God's foreknowledge.



## CHAPTER VII.

*Objections considered.*

1. **I**T is argued, that we are possessed of a self-determining power and a liberty to either side, because we find, that we have a power to consider and examine an action proposed to us, and to *suspend* our determination upon it, till we shall have duly considered it.—But as the determination to suspend and examine is a voluntary act, it no more appears to be without motive or without moral necessity than any other voluntary act.—Suspension is either a voluntary act or not. If it be a voluntary act, it no more appears to be without motive and moral necessity, than any other voluntary act. If it be not a voluntary act, it is not a *free* act, nor is any liberty exercised in it; and therefore it is nothing to the present purpose.

To argue, that we have a power of self-determination, because we have a power to suspend an action, is as groundless, as to argue, that we have a power of self-determination, because we have a power to choose to act, or because we have a power of will. Suspension is a voluntary act or a volition, and the argument under consideration is this; A man has a volition, not at present to determine in a certain case; therefore he has a power efficiently to cause volition in himself. This argument is just as conclusive as the following; A man has a volition at present to determine in a certain case; therefore he has a power efficiently to cause volition in himself: Or as this; A man has a volition, therefore he has a power efficiently to cause volition in himself.

But if suspension be no voluntary act, but a total suspension of all volition, it is, if possible, still less a proof of self-determination. Self-determination is a voluntary act, and suspension is brought as an instance of



of self-determination. But how can that, which is no voluntary act be an instance of a voluntary act? This is as absurd as to argue self-determination from any intellectual perception, or from the perfect insensibility of a dead corpse.—But this mode of arguing is familiar with Dr. West, who constantly argues a self-determining power, from a power to *not act*, a power to be perfectly torpid.

2. Self-determination is argued from our own consciousness and experience. Dr. West says, page 26, that “we experience in ourselves, that in willing and choosing we act independently of any extrinsic cause.” Others hold, that we are *conscious* of self-determination and an exemption from extrinsic causality.—When gentlemen speak of experience and consciousness, they ought to confine their observations to themselves; as no man is conscious of more than passes in his own mind, and in such things a man can with certainty tell his own experience only. For my own part, I am not conscious of either self-causation of volition, or an exemption from extrinsic causality; and to be sure I am not conscious, that my volitions take place without cause and by mere chance. I am conscious of volitions of various kinds; but I never yet caught myself in the act of *making a volition*, if this mean any thing more than *having* a volition or being the subject of it. If any man be conscious, that he makes his own volitions, he is doubtless conscious of two distinct acts in this, one *the act made* by himself, another *the act making* or by which he makes *the act made*. Now will any man profess to the world, that he is or ever has been conscious of these distinct acts? If not, let him tell the world what he means by being the efficient cause of his own volitions. If he mean, that he has volitions, this is no more than the advocates for moral necessity are conscious of, and to grant that this is all that is meant, is to give up the argument. If it be meant, that he causes them by *the mind itself* or by some *power* of the mind and not by



by any *act* of the mind or of those powers ; I appeal to the reader, whether this be, or can be, a matter of consciousness. I take it to be universally granted, that no man can be conscious of more than the *acts* and perceptions of his own mind. The existence of the mind and of its powers, is *inferred* from the *acts*, and we are not properly conscious of them. Dr. Reid may be an authority with the gentlemen, with whom I am now concerned. “*Power*,” says he, “is not an object of any of our external senses, nor even an object of *consciousness*. That it is not seen, nor heard, nor touched, nor tasted, nor smelt, needs no proof. That we are not conscious of it, in the proper sense of the word, will be no less evident, if we reflect, that consciousness is that power of the mind, by which it has an immediate knowledge of its own *operations*. Power is not an operation of the mind, and therefore is *no object of consciousness*. Indeed every operation of the mind is the exertion of some power of the mind ; but we are conscious of the *operation only*, and the power lies behind the scene : And though we may justly *infer* the power from the operation, it must be remembered, that *inferring* is not the province of *consciousness*, but of *reason*.” *Essays on Active Powers*, p. 7.

If from our consciousness of volitions, it follows, that we *efficiently cause* those volitions, let a reason be given, why it will not equally follow from our consciousness of any perception, *e. g.* the sound of thunder, that we *efficiently cause* that too.

If we be the efficient causes of our own volitions, they are effects. But an effect is produced by a previous exertion of the efficient cause, which act is as distinct from the effect, as the divine creating act was distinct from the world created. Every effect is passive with regard to its cause, and passive in this respect, that the causal act of the efficient operates upon it : Therefore the volition is and must be distinct from the act of the efficient by which it is caused. If a man  
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be the efficient cause of his own volition and he be conscious of it, he is conscious of an act of his own mind previous to every volition caused by himself, efficiently causing that volition, and as this causing act must be a voluntary act, in order to be a free one, there must be an infinite series of voluntary acts causing one another, or one act before the first : And of this the man who is subject, must have a conscious experience, or else he cannot be conscious of self-determination. Whether any man will profess to be conscious of all this, we must wait to see. It is to be presumed however, that no man will profess to have experienced an infinite series of acts, or one act before the first act.

As to knowing by consciousness and experience, that our volitions are not the effect of an extrinsic cause ; this I conceive is an absolute impossibility, unless we know by experience and are conscious, that we ourselves efficiently cause them in the manner just now described, viz. in an infinite series, or with one act before the first. Unless we be conscious, that we cause our own first volition by a previous act, we cannot be conscious, that we cause it at all. And if we be not conscious, that we cause that, we cannot be conscious but that it was caused extrinsically. If we do not experience that we cause our volitions by our own previous acts, we do not experience, that we cause them at all. All we experience is the volitions themselves, and we have no more evidence, that they are not the effects of an extrinsic cause, than from the experience of any of our ideas of sensation, we have evidence that those ideas are not excited by an extrinsic cause.

Let an instance be taken and I presume no man will pretend, that he is conscious, that he causes one volition by another : *e. g.* a volition to give to the poor. Will any man pretend, that he is conscious, that he causes in himself a volition to give to the poor, by a previous volition ; and that he in the first place  
finds,



finds, by consciousness, that he chooses to have a volition to give to the poor before he has it, and that by this previous choice he becomes willing to give to the poor? If no man will pretend this, but every man by the bare stating of the case sees, that it implies the absurdity that he is willing before he is willing, surely it is high time to give up this argument from experience and consciousness.

It has been said, that we *perceive* no extrinsic influence producing our volitions. Nor do we perceive any extrinsic influence producing a great part of our thoughts and perceptions, which yet it will not be pretended, that we ourselves cause.

It is impossible for a man to be conscious of a negative, otherwise than as he is either not conscious of it, or is conscious of the opposite positive. Therefore when it is said, that we are conscious, that our volitions are not the effect of an extrinsic cause, the meaning must be either that we are not conscious, that they are the effect of an extrinsic cause, or that we are conscious, that we do efficiently cause them ourselves. That we are not conscious, that our volitions are the effect of an extrinsic cause, is no proof, that they are in fact not the effect of such a cause, because if they were the effect of such a cause, still we should not be conscious of it. If whether they be the effect of such a cause or not, we should not be conscious, that they are the effect of such a cause, then the circumstance that we are not conscious, that they are the effect of such a cause, is no proof either way. Nor are we conscious, that we do efficiently cause our own volitions, as it is presumed appears by what has been already said in this and former chapters.

But if we were conscious, that we do efficiently cause our own volitions, this would be no argument against the absolute previous certainty or moral necessity of all our volitions. Such efficiency may have been from eternity the object of the divine absolute foreknowledge or decree. So that to a consciousness



sciousness of liberty as opposed to moral necessity, it is requisite, that we be conscious not only, that we efficiently cause our own volitions, but that we cause them, with the circumstance, that it was previously uncertain, whether we should cause them or not. But of this circumstance it is impossible, that we should be conscious; it is no act or perception of the mind, and therefore cannot be an object of consciousness.

Archbishop King speaks of a man's being "conscious, that it was in his power, to have done otherwise than he has done." If this mean any thing opposite to moral necessity, it must mean, that a man is conscious, that it was not previously certain, that he would do as he has done. But of this no man can be conscious, for the reason already given.

3. It is further argued, that we act as if we were under no necessity, but at perfect liberty; and that therefore the doctrine of moral necessity is contradicted by all our conduct, and the maxims of it.— To this I answer, that our conduct does by no means show, that we are not influenced by motives, or that we act without motives, without design, without biases, tastes, appetites or any such principles, and in perfect indifference, insensibility and stupidity. On the other hand, the conduct of all mankind shows, that they are actuated by motives, biases, various passions and appetites, which have as stated and regular an effect on their minds and conduct, as second causes have in the natural world. The conduct of men does by no means show, that their conduct is previously altogether uncertain and left to mere chance. It does indeed show, that they are free agents in the proper sense; *i. e.* intelligent, voluntary agents, acting upon motives and various principles in human nature, natural and acquired; and therefore we use arguments and motives with one another to influence each other's conduct. All this is perfectly consistent with the scheme of moral necessity for which



which I plead, and is implied in it : And all government civil and domestic is not only consistent with that scheme, but is built upon it ; otherwise in vain would be all the motives of rewards and punishments exhibited as the means of government, and by which government is carried into effect.

If moral necessity be inconsistent with the practice of mankind, so is that previous certainty implied in the divine foreknowledge ; for that, with respect to moral actions, is moral necessity.

4. It is objected, that on this plan all agency and action are destroyed or precluded.—Answer ; If by agency and action be meant self-determinate or contingent agency and action, I grant that this scheme does preclude them and means to preclude them. But it is not allowed, that such agency and action are necessary to a rational, moral being, or are at all desirable or even possible : And to take these for granted, is to beg the main points in dispute. Let it be shown that such agency and action are necessary, desirable, or possible, and something to the purpose will be done. But rational voluntary agency or action, arising from motive and principle, and directed to some end, is not precluded, but supposed and established by this scheme.

It is said, that on the hypothesis of a divine agency in all things, there is *but one agent* in the universe. But the Deity is no self-determinate agent : He is no more the efficient cause of his own volitions than he is of his own existence. If he were, his volitions would not be from eternity, nor would he be unchangeable. Therefore with as much reason, as it is said, that there is *but one agent* in the universe, it might have been said, that there is *not one*. Self-efficiency of volition is either necessary to agency and action, or it is not. If it be necessary, God is not an agent. If it be not necessary, we are agents and God too.

It is further said, that on this plan of a moral necessity established by God, all human actions are  
nothing



nothing but the operations of God actuating men, as the soul actuates the body.—If this mean, that God is the remote and first cause of all things, and that he brings to pass all things and all human actions, either by an immediate influence, or by the intervention of second causes, motives, temptations, &c. we allow it: We firmly believe, that these are under the control and at the disposal of Providence. But because the devil tempted Eve, it will not be pretended, that she acted nothing, and was merely acted upon by the devil, as the human body is actuated by the soul; that because God sent his prophets to the Israelites, to preach to them, the prophets acted nothing; that when God affords the aids of his grace to any man, so far as he is influenced by these aids to an action, it is no action of his; that when the goodness of God leadeth a sinner to repentance, the sinner does nothing, does not repent; but this repentance is the act or exercise of the divine mind, and in it God repents.

If when it is objected, the scheme of moral necessity precludes action, action mean volition; the objection is groundless: We hold as strenuously as our opponents, that we all have action in this sense. But if by action they mean any thing else, they must mean something in which there is no volition. But that any such thing should be an action is absurd and what they will not pretend. The circumstance, that a man causes his own volitions, if it were possible, would not imply agency or action, unless the causation or causing act were a volition. For instance, if a man in a convulsion, having a sword in his hand, involuntarily thrust it into his friend's bosom, this is not agency: Yet the man causes the thrust and the wound. But if the causing act be a volition, it runs into the absurdity of an infinite series of volitions causing one another.

Dr. West, in Part II, p. 8, says, “If the Deity is the proper efficient cause of volition, then the mind is entirely passive in all its volitions, and consequently cannot be in any *proper* sense an agent.” We grant,  
M that



that the Deity is the primary efficient cause of all things, and that he produces volitions in the human mind by such second causes as motives, appetites, biases, &c. and the human mind, in being the subject of the divine agency whether mediate or immediate, is passive. Still we hold, that volition is *an action*, as has been already explained. Nor is there the least absurdity in the supposition, that an action should be the effect of a divine or other extrinsic agency, unless by action or volition be meant a self-caused or an uncaused action or volition. But for Dr. West in the present case to mean this *by action in the proper sense*, is to beg the question. The very question is, whether action in the proper sense of the word, be self-caused or uncaused. And if, when he says, "If the Deity is the efficient cause of volition, the mind cannot be in any *proper sense* an agent;" he mean an agent, who efficiently produces an act of will in himself, or who is the subject of a volition which is uncaused; I grant, that the mind cannot be such an agent; I believe, that such agency is an absurdity and impossibility, and call on Dr. West to clear it of the absurdity and impossibility, which has long since been pointed out to be implied in it.

Besides; the Doctor's reasoning may be retorted, thus; If the mind itself be the proper efficient cause of volition, then the mind is entirely passive in its volitions, and consequently in volition cannot be in any proper sense an agent. For every effect must be passive, seeing it cannot contribute any thing towards its own existence. Volition or the mind acting is either an effect, or it existed from eternity, or it came into existence without cause. Neither of the two last will be pretended. Therefore it is an effect; and as every effect is passive, the mind in volition is, on the ground of Dr. West's argument, in no proper sense an agent in volition.

The Doctor proceeds, *ibid*, p. 8, "Either volition is  
 " only the immediate action of the Deity on the mind,  
 " or



“ or it is distinct from it. If volition is distinct from  
 “ the action of the Deity on the mind, then the action  
 “ of the Deity on the mind, is only to produce all the  
 “ requisites for action ; and consequently there is no  
 “ absurdity in supposing, that when all these requisites  
 “ have taken place, the mind is then only put in a ca-  
 “ pacity for acting.”——On this I remark, Volition  
 is granted to be entirely distinct from the action of  
 the Deity, as distinct from it, as the motion of a plan-  
 et is. But it is not granted to follow hence, that the  
 action of the Deity does no more than produce all  
 the necessary requisites for action. Dr. West will  
 grant, that when the Deity causes a planet to move, he  
 does more than to produce the requisites for its mo-  
 tion, unless in requisites for its motion be compre-  
 hended the actual production of its motion. If this  
 be his meaning with regard to the action of the mind,  
 there is an absurdity in supposing, that when all those  
 requisites have taken place, the mind is only put into  
 a capacity for acting or not acting. And whatever be  
 his meaning in producing requisites, I do not allow  
 they do or can put the mind into a capacity of *not*  
*acting, i. e.* of sinking itself into perfect torpitude.

What immediately follows the last quotation is, “ If  
 “ besides presenting to the mind the requisites for ac-  
 “ tion, the Deity does produce a certain modification  
 “ of the mind called volition, in which modification the  
 “ mind is wholly passive, then there is no action, but on-  
 “ ly the immediate action of the Deity on the mind ; and  
 “ volition is nothing distinct from the immediate action of  
 “ the Deity.” The very same mode of reasoning will prove,  
 that bodily motion is nothing distinct from the action of  
 the Deity ; thus, If besides producing the requisites for  
 motion, the Deity produce a certain modification of  
 matter, called motion, in which matter is wholly pas-  
 sive, then there is only the immediate action of the Deity  
 on matter, and motion is nothing distinct from the imme-  
 diate action of the Deity.—— Yet it is presumed, that Dr.  
 West will not pretend, that when God causes a plan-



et to move round in its orbit, the Deity himself and he only moves round in that orbit ; or that the motion of the planet is nothing distinct from the action of the Deity. Now volition, though caused by the Deity, is as distinct from the action of the Deity, by which it is caused, as the motion of a planet is from the action of God by which that is caused.

The Doctor says, p. 10, "If when the mind acts on any particular object, the Deity produces a new act or a new operativeness in the mind, then there must be a change in the mind." Doubtless there is so far a change, as is implied in the new act : And what then? Why the Doctor "upon the closest examination cannot find any change in the *operativeness* of his mind." Be it so ; yet as it is supposed, that his mind is the subject of a new act, he can doubtless find a change in the act of his mind ; and if he cannot find a change in the *operativeness* of it, it must be because operativeness, which is a peculiar and favourite word with the Doctor, means something different from act, and therefore is nothing to the present purpose, as the subject under consideration is the production of a new act by the Deity : And we do not pretend, that when the Deity produces a new act in the mind, he produces a new *operativeness* too, unless act and operativeness be the same. If they be the same, whenever the Doctor can perceive a change in the act of his mind, he can doubtless perceive a change in this operativeness of it.

The Doctor thinks he has said something new concerning his favourite word *operativeness*: But I see nothing new or important in it, unless it be a new word used in an ambiguous manner.

"I say, that the operativeness of the mind on different objects is always uniformly one and the same thing, and not that there are as many operations, as there are objects on which the mind acts;" *ibid*, p. 13. Here it is manifest, that the Doctor uses the word *operativeness* as synonymous with *operation*, otherwise he is guilty of the most gross



gross equivocation. And is it indeed one and the same operation of mind to love virtue and love roast beef? To choose the service of God and choose a pine apple? This is new indeed: In this, I presume the Doctor is an original!

5. My actions are *mine*; but in what sense can they be properly called *mine*, if I be not the efficient cause of them?—Answer; My thoughts and all my perceptions and feelings are *mine*; yet it will not be pretended, that I am the efficient of them all.

6. It is said to be self-evident, that *absolute necessity* is inconsistent with *liberty*.—Answer; This wholly depends on the meaning of the words *liberty* and *necessity*. *Absolute natural necessity* is allowed to be inconsistent with *liberty*; but the same concession is not made with regard to *absolute moral necessity*. All that is requisite to answer this and such like objections is to explain the words *liberty* and *necessity*. If by *liberty* be meant *uncertainty*, undoubtedly *absolute moral necessity*, which is the certainty of a moral event, is utterly inconsistent with *liberty*. But if by *liberty* be meant exemption from *natural necessity*, there is not the least inconsistency between the most *absolute moral necessity* and the most perfect freedom or exemption from *natural necessity*. The most perfect exemption from *natural necessity* is consistent with the most *absolute previous certainty* of a moral action. Judas in betraying his Lord “according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” was entirely exempted from *natural necessity*; yet his conduct was according to an *absolute previous certainty*.

7. That we have liberty of self-determination is argued from our *moral discernment*, or sense of right and wrong and of desert of praise and blame. And some are so confident of the sufficiency of this argument against *moral necessity*, that they are willing to rest the whole cause on this single point. It is therefore a very important point. It is said, that our estimating the moral character of the man, from his internal dis-



positions and acts, is on the supposition, that these are *within the power* of the man. But the word *power* is equivocal; if it mean *natural* power, and that the agent is under no *natural* inability, (as before explained) to other dispositions and acts; it is granted, that in this sense they are in his power. But if it mean, that there was no previous certainty, that he would have those very dispositions and acts; and that no man will or can reasonably blame himself or another but in case of a perfect previous uncertainty with respect to those dispositions and acts; this is not granted, nor is it proved.

It is said, that no man ever did commend or blame himself for what he knew to be *necessary* and *unavoidable*, not within his power, or not determined by himself. This stript of the ambiguity of words is this merely; that no man ever did commend or blame himself for what he knew to be previously certain, and was not entirely casual. But this is manifestly false; because every man knows or may know, that all things are previously certain, as they are the objects of the infallible foreknowledge of God: And if no man can commend or blame himself for what is previously certain, no man can commend or blame himself for any thing.

Will it be pretended, that we are more blamable for an action, which is previously uncertain and casual, and which we perform by chance without motive, end or design, than for that which is previously certain and future, and which we do from motive, and with an end and design? Take the instance of Judas's treachery. The fact is, that this treachery was previously certain and infallibly foreknown by God. Now, was Judas less blamable than if his conduct had been previously uncertain, and had taken place by pure chance? To say, that he was blamable, if this conduct proceeded from self-determination, affords no satisfaction, unless this self-determination were by chance. For otherwise the self-determining act was previously certain and morally necessary, and therefore li-  
able



able to all the objections, which are brought against moral necessity in any case.

Blameworthiness is nothing but moral turpitude or odiousness; praiseworthiness is nothing but moral amiableness or excellence. But the moral amiableness of an action does not depend on the circumstance, that it is efficiently caused by ourselves; because this runs into the absurdity and impossibility of an infinite series of actions causing one another. Nor does it depend on this circumstance, that the action is, as Dr. West holds, uncaused; for no actions of creatures fall under this description. Either of those hypotheses would shut moral amiableness and odiousness out of the world.

That moral necessity or previous certainty of moral conduct is consistent with moral discernment, may be argued from the case of the saints and angels in heaven. It will not be pretended, but that there is a certainty, that they will continue in their state of perfect holiness and happiness to eternity. Nor will it be pretended, but that they are the subjects of moral discernment and of that virtue and holiness which is truly amiable in the moral sense, and the proper object of approbation and reward. Therefore moral necessity is not inconsistent with praise and blame.

I need not insist on the necessary holiness of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The writers in opposition to moral necessity insist much on its inconsistency with accountableness. This is really no other than to insist, that it is inconsistent with praise and blame or with moral agency; and is the same objection, which we have been considering. To be accountable is to be liable to be called to an account for an action, and to be the proper subject of reward or punishment. But this is no other than to be worthy of praise or blame, and to deserve love or hatred, complacency or disapprobation, on account of moral temper or conduct. So that what has been



said concerning praise and blame, is equally applicable to accountableness.

It has been long since shown by President Edwards, that the moral amiableness and odiousness of actions, and their desert of praise or blame, or the essence of virtue and vice, depend not on the circumstance, that actions are efficiently caused by the subject; but that the acts themselves, without any consideration of their efficient cause, are amiable or odious: As otherwise virtue and vice will be thrown back from the caused act, to the causing act, till they are thrown out of the universe. If they consist not in acts of the will themselves, but in the acts by which they are caused, as these causing acts are also caused, virtue and vice must for the same reason consist not in them, but those by which they are caused, and so on to an act which is not caused. But this being not caused by the subject, can, on the principle of our opponents, have no virtue or vice in it. Thus there would be no place found in the universe for virtue and vice: Not in the caused acts, because virtue and vice consist not in them, but in their cause. Not in any uncaused act or acts, because they, by the supposition, are not caused by their subject. There is no way to avoid this consequence, but to allow that virtue and vice, desert of praise and blame, consist, in the acts themselves and not in their cause; or if there be any virtue or vice in the cause, this is distinct from the virtue or vice, which there is in the acts themselves. If I be accountable for any volition, for the sole reason, that I cause it; then I am accountable for the act, by which I cause it, for the sole reason, that I cause that, and so on in an infinite series.

Besides; the mere circumstance, that I cause my own volition, does not on the principles of our opponents, make me accountable for it: Because that I should cause it may be a matter of previous certainty, as it may be foreknown, and even decreed, by God, that I shall cause it; and therefore I cause it  
not



not freely in the sense of our opponents, but necessarily, under the influence of absolute moral necessity.

But Dr. West holds, that all our volitions are without cause. Then they take place by blind fate or chance. And how, on his principles, are we accountable for them?

The true ground of accountableness and of praise and blame, is not the circumstance, that we ourselves efficiently cause our own volitions; or the circumstance, that they take place without cause, by mere chance; but the nature, moral aspect and tendency of those volitions, and of the actions which flow from them.

Our opponents observe, that we allow, that men must be the voluntary causes of their external actions, in order to be accountable for them: And then they ask, why we do not for the same reason allow, that we must be the voluntary causes of our acts of will, that we may be accountable for them? The answer is, that external actions are not volitions. The volitions of rational beings, are in their own nature moral acts, and for that reason the subjects of them are accountable for them. But external actions are not of a moral nature in themselves, and therefore the subjects of them are accountable for them then only, when they are the effects of volition. Besides; that external actions should be the effects of volition does not run into the absurdity of an infinite series, as is implied in the supposition, that all volitions are the effects of previous volitions.

Dr. West says, "I have already shown, that necessity shuts out all sense of vileness and unworthiness;" Part II, p. 39. Where he has shown this, he has not informed us. If he had, perhaps his readers, on perusal of the passage, would not have joined with him in the opinion, that he had shown it. For my part, I cannot find, that he has shown it in any part of his two books.—If moral necessity, which is previous certain futurity of a moral act, "shut out all sense of vileness and unworthiness;" then it seems, that in order that a man may have any sense of vileness in sin, he must act without any previous certainty in the nature



ture of things, or in divine foreknowledge, what his actions will be ; *i. e.* he must act by mere chance.

8. It is objected, that this doctrine of moral necessity makes men mere machines.—This objection, which is frequently made by all our opponents, depends on the sense affixed to the word *machine*. If it mean an intelligent voluntary agent, who does not act by perfect contingency or chance, and who does not take one step before his first step ; but acts from such motives and pursues such objects, as appear to him most eligible ; I grant, that we are machines : And in the same sense the saints and angels in heaven, and all intelligent beings, are machines. But whether it be not a great abuse of language, and whether it be not an artifice of our opponents, to excite a popular prejudice and clamour against our doctrine, to use the word *machine* in this sense ; I leave the reader to judge.—If by *machine* be meant, what is commonly meant by it, a mere material engine, without volition, knowledge or thought in itself ; I presume, that our opponents themselves will not pretend, that on our principles, men are such machines as this.

Do those who make this objection, hold, that the human understanding is a *machine* ? Or that, in understanding, reasoning, judging, remembering, &c. man acts mechanically ? Yet all grant, that in these things he acts necessarily.

If moral necessity imply, that we are machines, then whatever induces a moral necessity, or actually influences or persuades us to any conduct, turns us into machines. Now the opposers of moral necessity often speak of the aids of grace and of the Spirit, as necessary and influential to virtue and religion. But if any man become the subject of true virtue or piety *by the aids of God's grace*, so far he is passive, he is wrought upon and governed by an extrinsic cause, and his conduct is the effect of that cause. But every effect is *necessary* with respect to its cause. Therefore whoever is led by this cause to virtue or piety,



piety, is led necessarily, and according to the objection now before us, is turned into a mere *machine*.——

On the ground of this objection all sinners abandoned by God, all the damned and devils in hell, all the saints and angels in heaven, the man Christ Jesus, and even God himself, are mere *machines*.——How necessary it is, that those who make an objection to any system, should consider first whether the objection be not equally forcible against doctrines which they themselves hold!

9. It is further objected, that moral necessity places men, with respect to liberty, on a level with brutes.——If by liberty be meant contingency or previous uncertainty, I grant that the actions of men and brutes are in this sense equally void of liberty; a previous certainty attends them equally. Or if it could be made to appear, that the actions of men are previously uncertain; I should maintain, that those of brutes are equally uncertain, and in this sense equally free.——If by liberty be meant exemption from extrinsic causality of volition; I grant, that in this sense also the actions of men and brutes are equally void of liberty. Men no more manufacture their own volitions, than brutes; and there is no more evidence, that men act without motive or design, than that brutes do. But if by liberty be meant *rational* liberty, the liberty of a *moral* agent, I hold that men are possessed of this, and brutes not. Brutes are no moral agents; but it is for the want of reason and intelligence, not of any power of will. If Sir Isaac Newton's horse had had as much reason and knowledge as his master, he no doubt would have had as much moral liberty, and would have been equally a moral agent and equally accountable. Without reason and intelligence, though a horse should have a liberty of perfect uncertainty and act by the purest chance; and though he should propagate one volition by another, or without another, with ever so great dexterity; he would be a brute still, and no more a  
moral



moral agent, than he is now that he acts by motive or appetite. So that the difference between a man and a beast, as to moral agency, consists not in liberty of contingence or liberty of self-determination; but in reason and knowledge.

We might on this subject venture to turn the tables on our opponents, and hold, that if a power of self-determination be liberty, brutes are free as well as men. The ass determining to eat of one of two equally good bundles of hay, is as good an instance to prove, that she has a self-determining power, as any brought to prove it in men. So that if those instances prove it in men, this proves it in brutes. Self-determining power then is nothing distinctive between men and brutes.

The capacity of considering and judging, of distinguishing virtue and vice, of deliberating, reasoning, reflecting, and suspending, have been mentioned as distinguishing between men and brutes. But all these, except *suspending*, are acts of the intellect, not of the will: And suspension, though an act of the will, does not appear to imply self-determination more than any other act of the will. Besides; brutes suspend, as well as men. A dog in quest of his master, will suspend proceeding in any road, till he is satisfied, in which his master has gone. And sheep, a more stupid race, on hearing a dog bark, will often suspend their flight, till they see from what quarter their enemy is approaching.

It is said, that external liberty and spontaneity belong to brutes and mad men, as well as to rational men. Be it so; yet the power and proper exercise of reason does not belong to them.—It is said, that if an action's being voluntary makes it virtuous or vicious; then brutes would be the subjects of virtue or vice. But merely that an action is voluntary does not constitute it virtuous or vicious. It must besides be the action of a rational being.

Dr. Clarke, the greatest champion for the self-determining power, expressly grants that children,



dren, beasts and even every living creature possess it. Remarks on Collins, p. 27. "The actions of children, and the actions of every living creature are all of them essentially free. The mechanical and involuntary motion of their bodies, such as the pulsation of the heart and the like, are indeed all necessary; but they are none of them actions. Every action, every motion arising from the self-moving principle, is essentially free. The difference is this only, in men this physical liberty is joined with a sense or consciousness of moral good or evil, and is therefore eminently called liberty. In beasts the same physical liberty or self-moving power, is wholly separate from a sense or consciousness or capacity of judging of moral good or evil and is vulgarly called spontaneity. In children the same physical liberty always is from the very beginning; and in proportion as they increase in age and in capacity of judging, they grow continually in degree not more free, but more moral, agents." Thus we have the Doctor's authority, that children and beasts possess a self-determining power, as well as men, and that they are not only as really free as men, but that their freedom is in degree equal to that of men; and that what they want to constitute them moral agents, is not liberty, but reason and a capacity of judging.

10. Much has been said by Dr. Clarke and others after him, concerning the beginning of motion; by motion meaning volition, if they mean any thing to the purpose. The argument is, that if motion, *i. e.* volition, had a beginning, it was begun by God, and of course he had a self-moving or self-determining power, a power efficiently to cause volition in himself, and actually did thus cause it. That volition even in the Deity had a beginning, the Doctor argues thus; "Motion must either finally be resolved into a first mover, in whom consequently there is liberty of action," *i. e.* self-determination, "or else into an infinite chain of causes and effects without  
" any



“ any cause at all ; which is an express contradiction,  
 “ except motion could be necessarily existent in its  
 “ own nature ; which that it is not, is evident, be-  
 “ cause the idea of rest is no contradiction ; and also be-  
 “ cause there being no motion without a particular  
 “ determination one certain way, and no one deter-  
 “ mination being more necessary than another, an es-  
 “ sential and necessary tendency to motion in all de-  
 “ terminations equally, could never have produced  
 “ any motion at all.” *Remarks on Collins*, p. 11, 12.

Motion throughout this quotation means internal motion or volition, or the whole is nothing to the purpose. I grant that external motion, the motion of matter, had a beginning, and that after the creation of matter. But the whole question is concerning volition, the act or motion of the mind. That this is not necessarily existent, and therefore not from eternity, the Doctor argues first from this, that “ the idea of rest,” *i. e.* of an entire absence or non-existence of volition, “ is no contradiction.” It is doubtless as much and in the same sense a contradiction, as the idea of the entire non-existence of knowledge or intelligence, or of all being : And if this argument prove, that volition had a beginning, it will equally prove, that knowledge or the divine existence had a beginning. Volition is just as necessarily existent as God is ; without volition he would not be God. It is impossible, that God should from eternity have intelligence and not from eternity have volition.

The Doctor goes on to argue the beginning of volition thus ; “ There being no motion, *i. e.* volition,  
 “ without a particular determination one certain way,  
 “ and no one determination being in nature more  
 “ necessary than another, an essential and necessary  
 “ tendency to volition in all determinations equally,  
 “ could never have produced any volition at all.”  
 On this I observe,——

1. That by the same argument all intellectual ideas and perceptions of happiness in the divine mind have



a beginning ; thus, There being no intellectual idea without a particular determination one way, and no one determination being in nature more necessary than another, an essential and necessary tendency to all determinations of idea equally, could never have produced any idea at all. And with regard to perception of happiness, thus ; There being no perception of happiness or misery without a particular determination one certain way, and no one determination being in nature more necessary than another, an essential and necessary tendency to the perception of happiness or misery in all determinations equally, could never have produced any particular perception of them at all.—The same argument will prove, that God's existence is not eternal and necessary ; thus, There can be no being, who is not a particular, determinate being ; and no particular form or kind of being is in nature more necessary than another. But an essential and necessary tendency to existence in all forms and kinds equally, could never have been the foundation of any particular being at all.

If in these cases it should be objected, that one determination of idea is in nature more necessary than another ; that which is according to truth and fact, is more necessary than that which is contrary to truth ; and that feeling of happiness, and that form of existence which is most complete and perfect, is more necessary, than that which is less perfect : I answer, for the same reason, it must be granted, that the volition which is most rational, wise and holy, is more necessary, than that which is less wise and holy ; and therefore this particular volition or determination of will is necessarily existent in its own nature, and is without beginning.

2. From the supposition, that the volitions of God are not eternal and as necessarily existent as the divine knowledge or divine existence, it follows, that he is very far from an unchangeable being ; that from eternity he existed without any volition or choice of  
one



one thing in preference to another ; that when the eternity *a parte ante*, as it is called, had run out, he began to will and choose, and from that time he has been the subject of various acts of will, but never before, and therefore has been the subject of a very great change.

That God should from eternity exist without volition, and that in time he should become the subject of volition, implies not only a very great change in God, but that from eternity he was not a voluntary agent, and therefore no agent at all. So that the very argument which Dr. Clarke uses to prove, that God is a self-determinate agent, in fact does, directly contrary to his intention, prove, that he was from eternity no agent at all.

If God began volition in himself, he began it either voluntarily or involuntarily. If he began it voluntarily, he would be the subject of an infinite series of volitions causing one another; which is an absurdity, impossibility and contradiction. If he began it involuntarily, he did not begin it freely.

In his remarks on Collins, p. 6, Dr. Clarke says, "To be an agent signifies, to have a power of beginning motion." *Motion* here, if it be at all to the purpose, must mean *volition*: And to say, "To be an agent signifies to have a power of beginning volition." is a servile begging of the question, utterly unworthy of Dr. Clarke.

In the same book, p. 44, he observes, "That if motion exist necessarily of itself—with a determination one certain way; then that determination is necessary, and consequently all other determinations impossible; which is contrary to experience." And how does it appear by experience, that any other determinations of will are, or ever were, possible in the divine mind, than that which actually exists in it? Did Dr. Clarke experience divine exercises, and find by that experience, that other volitions are possible in God than what actually exist? Surely this was



was written by the Doctor with great inattention!—  
 If to save the Doctor it should be said, that this observation relates not to volition, but to the motion of matter; this, if it were the meaning of the Doctor, would argue equal inattention. Would he have imagined, that because the motion of matter is not from eternity and necessarily existent; therefore the same is true of thought and volition?

11. Self-determination has been argued from the irregular conduct of mankind, and especially from the consideration, that their *moral exercises* are so irregular and out of course. But the exercises and conduct of men, are not more irregular than the blowing of the wind, or the state of man's body often is in sickness. Yet it will not be pretended, that this consideration proves, that sickness or the blowing of the wind is self-determinate.

12. Dr. West objects, that “according to Mr. Edwards, the mind must always be governed by chance or accident; *i. e.* by something unforeseen or not designed by the mind beforehand. Thus, let a man's mind be ever so strongly determined at present, to pursue any particular object, yet that extrinsic cause, which has the entire command of his will, may the next hour frustrate all his purposes, and determine him to a quite contrary pursuit. If this is not to be governed by blind fate and chance, I know not what is.” Part II, p. 31.—On this I observe,—

1. Whether the Doctor do or do not know, what it is to be governed by blind fate and chance, is of no importance to his readers; and what a pity, that he should consume so much of his own and his readers' time, in appeals to himself as an authority.

2. According to this account, to be under the governing influence of any extrinsic cause, is to be governed by blind fate and chance. Therefore the planetary system and all the material world are under the government of blind fate and chance; so were the prophets and apostles, so far as they were inspired



and influenced by the Spirit of God. Does Dr. West acknowledge this? If not, must he not own, that when he wrote the passage above quoted, he was mistaken in his idea of being governed by blind fate and chance?

3. Doubtless President Edwards holds, that the human mind is often governed by motives “unforeseen and not designed by the mind beforehand.” And as Dr. West holds, that the mind never acts without motive, unless he hold also, that it always foresees beforehand, the motives on which it will in future act, he must join with President Edwards in the idea, that it acts on, or which is the same, is governed by motives “unforeseen and not designed by the mind beforehand:” And therefore on the same ground, on which he charges President Edwards with holding principles, which imply that the mind is governed by blind fate and chance, he may be charged with the same.

He also holds, that God “regulates and governs all things and sets bounds to the actions of all rational creatures, to bring about his own purposes,” and that “infallibly.” Part II, p. 46, 47. “That the Deity governs free agents as *perfectly* and makes them perform his purposes as *infallibly*, as though they had no agency at all.” Ibid, p. 67. And that “every thing is *firmly fixed* in the divine mind.” Ibid, p. 49. Now the Deity is a cause extrinsic to the human mind, and by concession, he *regulates, governs, and overrules* all the actions of intelligent creatures, and *makes* them *infallibly* perform *his purposes*. Therefore “let a man’s mind be ever so strongly determined at present to pursue any particular object, yet that extrinsic cause,” the Deity, “which has the entire command of his will, may,” and certainly will, “frustrate all his purposes,” unless the object of his pursuit be agreeable to the purposes of the Deity. Now then I appeal to the reader, whether Dr. West do not as fully hold those principles which he says imply, that men are governed by blind fate and chance, as President Edwards. CHAPTER.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*In which is considered the Objection, that Moral Necessity implies, that God is the Author of Sin.*

**I**T is objected to the doctrine of moral necessity, that since this necessity and the connection between motives and volitions are established by God, he is the author of all the sin and wickedness in the universe; that he by the motives which he lays before creatures, tempts them to sin, and is himself answerable for all the sin committed by them. And a great deal of vehement declamation is poured out on this subject, well suited to take hold of the feelings and passions of men, but not to inform their understandings and assist their reason.

Before we proceed to a more direct and particular consideration of this objection, it is proper to show in what sense the advocates for moral necessity hold that the divine agency is concerned in the existence of sin.

1. They do hold, that all necessity and certainty or certain futurity, whether of natural or moral events, is established by God; of course that the connection between all causes and effects, and particularly the connection between motives and volitions, is established by the same supreme agent.

2. They hold, that all things, which come to pass in time, were certainly foreordained by God from eternity; that he foreordained them not in consequence of foreseeing, that the free will of man will bring them into existence; but the free will of man brings them into existence, in consequence of the divine decree, so far as that will does at all bring them into existence.

3. They hold, that whatever sin takes place among creatures, takes place not by the bare permission or non-influence of God; but under his superintending



ing providence, and in consequence of his disposing things so, that sin certainly or with moral necessity, follows.—President Edwards has explained himself fully on this head. Inquiry, p. 254; “If by *the author of sin* be meant the *sinner*, the *agent* or *actor* of sin, or the doer of a wicked thing; so it would be a reproach and blasphemy, to suppose God to be *the author of sin*. In this sense I utterly deny God to be the author of sin; rejecting such an imputation on the Most High, as what is infinitely to be abhorred; and deny any such thing to be the consequence of what I have laid down. But if by *author of sin* is meant the *permitter* or *not hinderer* of sin, and at the same time, a *disposer of the state of events in such a manner*, for wise, holy and most excellent ends and purposes, THAT SIN, if it be permitted and not hindered, WILL MOST CERTAINLY FOLLOW—I do not deny, that God is the author of sin—it is no reproach for the Most High to be *thus* the author of sin.”

The objections against such an agency of God in the existence of sin, as has been now described, are two; (1) That such divine agency is inconsistent with human liberty, moral agency and accountableness: (2) That it is inconsistent with the perfect holiness of God.—Before I answer these objections distinctly, I wish it to be observed, that they are inconsistent and mutually destroy each other.

If the divine agency in the establishment of moral necessity and the connection between motives and volitions, be inconsistent with our liberty and moral agency; then God in establishing such a necessity of any action in us, which we call sin, is not the cause or author of *sin*; for his agency so far from producing sin in us, renders us *incapable* of sin. Suppose God with moral necessity influence a man to kill another with malice prepense; if this necessitating influence as really destroy his moral agency, as if it turned him into a windmill, though the man kills the other, he commits no more sin in it, than if a windmill had



had killed him ; and consequently God is no more the author of sin in this instance, than if he had influenced the windmill to kill him, or had first turned the man into a windmill, and this windmill had in the course of providence been the instrument of his death. So that they who hold, that moral necessity is inconsistent with moral agency, must never object, that God is *the author of sin*, by establishing that necessity, and thus acts inconsistently with his perfect holiness.

On the other hand, if God do influence any man to *commit sin*, and thus act inconsistently with his perfect holiness, the man is a moral agent notwithstanding such influence, and there is no foundation to object, that the influence is inconsistent with liberty and moral agency ; and they who object that such influence implies, that God is the author of *sin*, must forever be silent concerning the inconsistency of that influence with human liberty and moral agency.

If moral necessity be inconsistent with moral agency, it is absolutely impossible and contradictory for God to dispose things so, that sin will certainly or with moral necessity follow. For on this supposition whatever certainly follows such a disposal cannot be sin or any other moral act, as moral agency is in the case destroyed by the disposal. Therefore it is impossible, that God in this way should cause sin, and therefore it is absurd and self-contradictory in those who hold, that moral necessity is inconsistent with moral agency, to charge us with blasphemy, as they frequently do, because we avow the sentiment, that God so disposes events that sin certainly follows.

Yet so far as I know, all those who oppose moral necessity, make both the objections before mentioned, and thus pull down with one hand, what they build up with the other. This is eminently true of Dr. West.

I now proceed to consider those objections distinctly.

1. It is objected, that a divine agency establishing a moral necessity of sin, is inconsistent with human liberty,



liberty, moral agency and accountableness.—  
 Answer: The divine agency in this case is no more inconsistent with human liberty, &c. than the moral necessity which it establishes. If this necessity be inconsistent with liberty, be it so; the divine agency which causes it, does not increase the inconsistency, beyond what would be, if that necessity took place without such agency. A mountain placed across the channel of a river, may be inconsistent with the river's flowing in that channel. But whether it were placed there by God, were constructed there by human art and labour, or happened there without cause, are questions immaterial as to the river's running in that channel, so long as the mountain is the very same. Therefore let our opponents prove, that moral necessity or a previous certainty of moral actions, is inconsistent with moral agency, and that moral agents must act by perfect contingence, mere chance and blind fate, and they will carry their point, without saying a word concerning the divine agency: And until they prove this, whatever they may say concerning the divine agency, will serve no good purpose to their cause, as to this part of the argument.

2. It is objected, that for God to establish a moral necessity of sin, or as President Edwards expresses it, "for God to dispose of the state of events in such a manner, for wise, holy and most excellent ends, that sin will most certainly and infallibly follow;" is inconsistent with the perfect holiness of God.—But in what respects is it inconsistent with his holiness? Or for what reasons are we to conclude, that it is inconsistent with his holiness? So far as I have been able to collect the reasons from the ablest writers on that side of the question, they are these:

(1) That whatever is in the effect is in the cause, and the nature of every cause may be known by the effect. Therefore if God so order things, that sin will certainly follow, he is the cause of sin, and therefore is sinful himself.—If this argument be good, God



is the subject of pain, sickness and death, since he is the cause of them: He is material and is the subject of all the properties of matter, extension, solidity, mobility, figure, colour, &c. because he created matter and all its properties. Yea he suffers the torments of hell, because he inflicts them.—This argument though urged by men of great fame, is too weak and absurd to bear inspection!

(2) If God dispose things so, that sin will certainly follow; he doubtless takes pleasure in sin and this implies sin in God himself.—If God do take a direct and immediate complacency in sin it is granted, that this would imply sin in God. But if he choose the existence of sin as a mean of good only, as pain and sickness may be the means of good; this implies no sin in God. Nor does it follow from his disposing things so, that sin certainly takes place, that he does directly delight in sin itself abstractly considered, any more than it follows from his inflicting sickness and misery on his creatures, that he takes a direct complacency in these. And we do not allow, but utterly deny, that God from a direct complacency in sin disposes things so, that it certainly follows. If our opponents believe that a direct complacency of God in sin is implied in our doctrine, it behoves them to make it out, and not to take it for granted.

Dr. West insists on this argument, Part II, p. 43. “If the Deity produces sinful volitions—then sin is his own work—and then he cannot hate sin, but must love it and delight in it.” It seems the Doctor foresaw that to this argument it would be answered that God’s producing sin in the manner before explained, no more implies a direct complacency in it, than his producing *miser*y implies a direct complacency in that; and he replies, that “the two cases are by no means parallel—that the Deity is nowhere represented as being angry at his creatures, because they suffer pain and distress—whereas with regard to moral evil, God is always represented



“ as hating it, and punishing the impenitent.” To this I rejoin, that the want of parallelism does not appear. For though God is not represented to be angry at *pain* and *mifery*, as they are not the proper objects of anger ; yet he is represented to be displeased with them ; and anger is only one kind of displeasure, displeasure at moral evil. And if God do produce a thing, with which he is displeased, why may he not produce a thing with which he is angry, and which he is disposed to punish as it deserves ? Let a reason be given, why he may not do the latter, as well as the former.

(3) God hates sin and doubtless he must hate to bring it into existence ; and therefore he will not so dispose things, that it will certainly come into existence. But God hates the pain, misery and death of his creatures in the same sense, that he hates sin ; yet we find in fact, that he does dispose things so, that they do take place among his creatures.

(4) That God should so dispose of events, that sin is the certain consequence, is doing evil, that good may come of it ; which is contrary to scripture, as well as reason.— This is merely asserting, but not proving what is asserted. How does it appear, that for God so to dispose of events, that sin is the certain consequence, and this to subserve the most wise and holy purposes, is doing evil ? To do evil is to commit sin ; and to say that this is to commit sin, is to beg the question. Let it be proved to imply, that God commits sin, and the point is gained. We assert, that to say, such a disposal implies, that God commits sin, is as groundless a proposition, as to say, that if God so dispose of events, that sickness is the certain consequence, implies, that God himself is sick. I presume, it will not be denied, that God did so dispose of events, that the certain consequence would be that Joseph should be sold into Egypt, and that our Saviour should be crucified. Nor will it be denied, that God made this disposition of events with a holy  
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and wise purpose. And if God may do this in one or two instances ; why may he not do the same in every instance, in which sin actually exists ?

(5) That God should make an establishment whereby any creature is laid under a moral necessity of sinning is a great injury, both to the creature himself, and also to the system ; as all sin is injurious to the system.—Answer : What injury can be pretended to be done to the creature, who is the subject of the sin, in the case described, so long as his liberty and moral agency remain entire ? And they do remain entire by the supposition ; else he would be incapable of sin. A creature which is not, and so long as it remains to be, not a moral agent, cannot be influenced even by God himself to commit sin : It would imply a contradiction. So that there is no foundation for complaint, that the subject is injured, by being laid under a moral necessity, or previous certainty, of sinning.—Besides ; this objection implies, that every moral agent is injured, unless it be a matter of perfect uncertainty, what his future actions shall be, uncertainty not only to himself and all creatures, but to God and in the nature of things : *i. e.* every moral agent is injured, unless he be left to act by pure chance.

With regard to injury to the system of intelligent beings, there is, if possible, still less foundation for objection on this ground. For it is a part of the doctrine of moral necessity, that God never establishes it, excepting when it's establishment is subservient and necessary to the general good of that system, implying the divine glory ; and to be sure, that God never so disposes of events, that sin certainly follows, unless such a dispensation is necessary to the general good : Nor ought the contrary to be taken for granted. If God do in any instance so dispose of events, that sin certainly follows, when the existence of that sin is not necessary to the general good, but injurious to it ; I confess, I see not how in this case, the divine holiness  
can



can be vindicated. But this is nothing peculiar to the introduction of sin. It would also be inconsistent with the divine perfect holiness and wisdom to create matter, or to cause holiness, in such circumstances as to disserve the general good.

(6) It is inquired, Where is the consistence between God's laying a man under a moral necessity of sinning, and then punishing him for that sin?—I answer,

1. How can God consistently make a man sick, and then apply medicines or any remedy toward his restoration? Punishment is inflicted to prevent either the subject of the punishment, or others, from falling into the same practice. If there be no inconsistency in bringing sickness on a man, and then healing him by medicine; where is the inconsistency in bringing sin, which is moral sickness, on a man, and whereby both he and that system are so far morally diseased, and then by punishment healing him or the system?

2. There is no consistence in the case, if moral necessity be incompatible with moral agency. But if it be entirely compatible with moral agency, there is no inconsistency in the case: For in laying a man under a moral necessity of *sinning*, as he is supposed still to *sin*, nothing is done to impair his moral agency or his desert of punishment. On this supposition it is immaterial as to desert of punishment, who or what is the cause of the moral necessity, whether God or any other being, or whether it happen without cause. Therefore God may as consistently punish a sinner, whom he himself has laid under a moral necessity of sinning, as he may punish him, provided he be laid under the same moral necessity by any other being, or by mere chance. If moral necessity be entirely consistent with desert of punishment, it is as impertinent to ask how God can consistently lay a man under a moral necessity of sinning and then punish him for it, as to ask how God can consistently make a man of a dark complexion or a low stature and then punish him, for any sins, which he may commit. For  
moral



moral necessity is no more inconsistent with sin and desert of punishment, than a dark complexion or a low stature. To lay a man under a moral necessity of sinning, is to make it certain, that he will sin : And to ask how God can consistently make it certain, that he will sin, and then punish him for that sin, implies that previous certainty is inconsistent with sin, and that in order to sin a man must act by mere chance.

It is no more inconsistent, for God to forbid men to sin, and yet so dispose things, that they certainly will commit sin ; than it is to forbid them to sin, and yet voluntarily to suffer other causes to lead them into sin. Nay, since liberty is out of the question, as by the very statement of the objection, it allows, that notwithstanding the divine disposal, the man who is the subject of that disposal does commit *sin* ; it is no more inconsistent for God to forbid men to sin, and yet so dispose things, that sin will follow, than it is for him to forbid it, and yet voluntarily permit men to sin by self-determination. For in disposing things so that sin follows, when the disposal is supposed to be consistent with sin and moral agency, nothing can be pretended to be inconsistent with the prohibition of sin, unless it be the divine consent, that sin should come into existence ; and this equally exists in the case of bare permission, as in the case of the aforesaid disposal. The law of God, which forbids all sin, does not imply, that God will prevent sin, by introducing the greater evil of destroying moral agency. Nor does it imply, that he will not consent in his own mind, that it be committed by men or other moral agents, rather than the said greater evil or other as great evil should take place. Therefore rather than that the same or as great an evil should take place, the Deity may not only consent to the existence of sin, but may consent, that second causes, motives, temptations, &c. should do whatever they can do, toward the introduction of it, consistently with the freedom of the creature. He may do all this without  
inconsistence



inconsistence and insincerity. The prohibition of sin in the law does not imply a wish or choice of the divine mind, all things considered, that sin should not be committed. It barely points out our duty, but reveals nothing of God's design, whether or not to permit it, or to dispose things so, that it will follow. Therefore there is no inconsistence between this prohibition and such a disposal in providence, as will be followed by sin.—A good master may strictly forbid his servant to steal; yet convinced, that he does steal, the master may in a particular case, wish him to steal, and even leave money exposed to him, that he may steal, and ultimately with a design that an advantage may be put into the master's hand, to convict, punish and reform his servant. There is no inconsistence in the master's thus forbidding theft, and yet from the motive before mentioned wishing to have it committed.

(7) It is said, that if God choose that the sinfulness of volitions should come into existence, and if he so dispose events, that it will certainly come into existence; there is no difference between this, and God's being himself the subject of sinful volitions.—I answer, there is the same difference in this case, as there is between God's choosing that a man should be sick, and being the subject of sickness himself; as there is between creating matter, and being himself material; and as there is between willing and causing the damnation of a sinner, and being himself the subject of damnation. It will not be pretended, that if God dispose events and circumstances in such a manner, that repentance, godly sorrow, faith in a Redeemer, submission and holy fear, take place in the heart of a man, God himself is the subject of those exercises.

If, though human liberty be left entire, God cannot so dispose things, that sin will certainly follow, without being himself the subject of a disposition friendly to sin; he cannot without the same implication choose, that sin should take place, rather than a greater evil. But our opponents allow, that God did  
choose,



choose, that sin should take place, rather than a greater evil ; they allow, that he had a perfect foreknowledge, that if he should create man with a self-determining power, and leave him to the free exercise of that power, the consequence would be, that he would commit sin. Therefore they allow, that God chose, that sin should come into existence, rather than human liberty should be destroyed, and rather than free agents should not be brought into existence. So that in the same sense, in which we hold, that God chose or was willing, that sin should come into existence, our opponents hold the same. We hold, that God chose that sin should take place, rather than a greater evil ; and therefore disposed of events consistently with human liberty, so that it certainly followed. They hold, that God chose, that sin should take place, rather than a greater evil, and therefore disposed of events, consistently with human liberty, so that it certainly followed, and when God certainly foresaw, that it would follow.

In that our opponents charge us with holding principles, which imply, that God is *the author of sin*, they allow, that whatever God does according to our principles toward the introduction of sin, is consistent with free agency in the subject of sin. This must be conceded by them ; else their charge is perfectly inconsistent and self-contradictory, as has been shown. Therefore since it is allowed, that whatever God has done toward the existence of sin, is consistent with the creature's free agency, the only question remaining, is, whether he have acted in this affair, with a holy and wise design, a design to promote the general good : And we argue from the essential perfections of God, that whatever he has done in this, as well as in every other instance, must have been done with such a design.

If it be said, that sin cannot even by the Deity, be made subservient to good ; the question will arise, why then did he so dispose circumstances that it did  
come



come into existence, and this when he foresaw the consequence? To answer, that he could not, consistently with free agency, keep it out of existence, is on the present supposition groundless. It is now supposed, that God did bring it into existence, consistently with free agency; and therefore he could doubtless keep it out of existence, consistently with the same free agency.

If the existence of sin be ultimately made subservient to good, or if it be necessary to the prevention of greater evil; what reason in the world, can be given, why God should not bring it into existence, in a way consistent with human free agency? In this way it must be brought into existence, if at all.—Our opponents themselves allow, as has been observed, that the existence of it was necessary to the prevention of greater evil, the evil of destroying human liberty, or of the non-existence of free agents: And for God in this view to consent to the existence of sin, as our opponents grant that he did, is as inconsistent with his moral character, as to give the same consent and to put forth any exertion toward its existence, consistent with human liberty. So long as the exertion is consistent with liberty, it cannot be pretended, that there is any thing in it more opposite to the moral character of God or more friendly to sin, than there is in the consent implied in that permission of sin, which our opponents hold. Therefore their plan is in this respect equally liable to the same objection of being inconsistent with the moral character of God, as our's.

(8) Dr. West argues, that if the Deity order things so that sinful volition follow, “ he must place the object in such a view before the mind, as to make it appear the greatest good under present circumstances; which implies, that he presents the object in a false point of light, and effectually deceives the mind;” and “ the apostle was under a great mistake, when he said, it was impossible for God to lie;” and to lie is sin. The Doctor, as usual, tells us, “ I  
“ can



“ can have no idea, that the Deity can produce a sinful volition in the human mind, in any other way, than what I have now described ;” Part II, p. 41.—On this I remark ;

1. It is very immaterial to others, what Dr. West can, and what he cannot, have an idea of. Does the Doctor mean this as an argument, that no other person can have an idea of it, or that it cannot be true ?

2. If when he speaks of God’s making sin appear the greatest good, he mean, that he makes it appear so to a man’s unbiafed reason, this is not true, nor is it pretended by any man.

3. When sin appears to any man the greatest good, it is in consequence of the influence of his corrupt appetites, and not by the dictates of his unbiafed reason. How a man becomes the subject of corrupt appetite, I do not undertake to say any further than President Edwards has said already, that God has disposed things so, that it takes place as an infallible consequence. But if God so dispose things, that an inordinate appetite for strong drink take place in the mind of a man, and by the influence of such appetite strong drink appear to him the greatest good ; does it hence follow, that God is a liar ? Will Dr. West assert it ? If not, the ground of his argument fails.

The Doctor further observes, that “ if God is the author of men’s lusts, he deceives them, by causing them to view things through the false medium of their lusts ;” *ibid*, p. 42, 43.—The expression, “ God is the author of men’s lusts,” is the Doctor’s, not President Edwards’s. It tends to mislead, and cannot be admitted, without explanation and qualifying. Suppose a man by leading his neighbour frequently into the immoderate use of strong drink, should produce an appetite for it in his neighbour, so that henceforward strong drink should appear to him the greatest good ; is the man, who does this, a liar ? Whether he be guilty of other sin, than lying, is nothing to the present purpose ; for Dr. West’s argument is, that  
God



God by producing lust in men, deceives the man in such a sense, as to disprove the words of the apostle, *that God cannot lie*. If the man above supposed be not guilty of lying, neither is the Deity in so disposing things, that lust infallibly follows.

(9) “ If the Deity be the positive efficient cause of sin, then there can be no foundation for repentance : “ For how can a man repent or be sorry, that he is just such a creature, in every respect, as the Almighty has “ been pleased to make him ? ” Ibid, p. 44. — With the same objection to the expression, “ positive efficient cause of *sin*, ” I observe, that this argument is equally good with respect to pain, sickness and calamity ; and will prove that no man ought to be sorry for any calamity befalling himself or others : For “ how can a man be sorry, that he is just such a creature, ” just as miserable, “ as God has made him ? ” If the Doctor say, that though calamity in itself is an evil and therefore to be regretted ; yet as God sends it, he will overrule it for good, and that in that view it is not to be regretted ; the same observations are applicable to the existence of sin. Sin in itself considered is infinitely vile and abominable, and proper matter of sorrow and repentance. But considering that it no more came into existence without the design and providence of God, than calamity did ; and considering, that its existence will be certainly overruled for final good ; its existence is no more to be regretted, than the existence of calamity and misery, especially extreme and eternal misery.

The Doctor proceeds ; “ What remorse of conscience can there be, when the sinner believes that “ every sinful volition was formed in him by the Deity ? ” Ibid. Sinful volitions proceed from some cause, or no cause. If they proceed from no cause, what remorse of conscience can there be, when the sinner believes and knows, that every sinful volition happened in him by pure chance ? If sinful volitions proceed from some cause, that cause is either the sinner himself



himself or some extrinsic cause. If they proceed from any other extrinsic cause, beside the Deity, the same difficulty will arise, and it may be asked with the same pertinency, as the above question is asked by Dr. West, What remorse of conscience can there be, when the sinner believes, that every sinful volition was formed in him by an extrinsic cause? If the efficient cause be the sinner himself, then "self acts on self and produces volition," which the Doctor denies: And if he did not deny it, it is absurd and impossible, as it runs into an infinite series of volitions propagating one another, and yet all this series would really amount to but one single volition, and this, as there would not then be a preceding causal volition, would not be efficiently, voluntarily and freely caused by the subject himself.

Besides; if the subject efficiently cause his own volitions, he either causes them under the influence of motives or not. If he cause them under the influence of motives, he causes them necessarily, and acts necessarily in causing them; and Dr. West says, "Where necessity begins, liberty ends;" *ibid*, p. 19. Therefore if a man efficiently cause his own volitions so as to be free from necessity, he must cause them without motive, aim or end; *i. e.* he must cause them in perfect stupidity, and in the exercise of Dr. West's torpid liberty of *not acting*. And then I ask, what remorse of conscience can there be, when the sinner believes, that he himself caused every sinful volition in himself, as involuntarily as a man in a convulsion strikes his friend, and as stupidly and unmeaningly as a door turns on its hinges?

Remorse of conscience is a sense of having done wrong; and whenever a person has done wrong, there is a foundation for remorse of conscience; and to take it for granted, that there can be no remorse of conscience, unless we determine our own volitions, is to take it for granted, that without self-determination we can do no wrong and are no moral agents; which is to beg the main question in this controversy. Let it  
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be shown, that without self-determination, we are not moral agents, and one important step will be taken toward settling this controversy. Yet even this step will not be decisive : It must be also shown, that our self-determination was not previously certain, but is exercised by mere chance : For if it be previously certain, it is morally necessary.

(10) If God have so disposed of events, that sin certainly follows, it is his work ; and to be opposed to sin is “ to be opposed to God’s work, and to be opposed to God ;” *ibid.*—So calamity is the work of God, and to be opposed to that, is to be opposed to God’s work, and to be opposed to God. And will Dr. West admit that every one who wishes to escape any calamity, is in a criminal manner opposing God ?

(11) “ If the Deity has formed sinful volitions in a man, because his glory could not be promoted without it ; then surely the sinner, if he loves God, must love him because he has made him a sinful creature, and ought to thank him for all the sins, which he has committed ;” *ibid.*—The difficulty attending most of Dr. West’s arguments, is, that if they prove any thing, they prove too much, and confute principles and facts, which he will not dare to deny. So with respect to this argument. The Doctor will not deny, that pain and calamity are the work of God. “ And if the Deity has” sent pain and calamity “ on a man, because his glory could not be promoted without them ; then surely the sinner, if he loves God, must love him, because he has made him a miserable creature, and ought to thank him for all the calamity and misery, which he suffers, for all his sickness and dangers, for the death of his wife, children, &c. &c. And if a man ought to thank God for these things, no doubt, “ a sinner ought to thank God “ for damnation.” If these consequences do not inevitably follow from the principle of Dr. West’s argument, let the contrary be shown, and not merely asserted.—Again ; “ If we are to thank God for  
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all the calamities and miseries which we do or shall suffer; "this will imply, that" calamity and misery "are blessings or favours; and consequently, if the  
 "finner is to thank God for damnation, then damnation is a blessing and favour——Hence finners who  
 "believe this doctrine, will be apt to conclude, that  
 "it is a matter of no consequence, whether they be  
 "saved or damned; seeing upon either supposition,  
 "they are sure that whatever they receive from God  
 "will be such a blessing, that they ought to be thankful for it." Ibid, p. 45.——Thus may the Doctor's arguments be retorted against himself.

If the Doctor should answer, Though calamity and misery in themselves are no blessings, yet when they are overruled by God to the good of those who suffer them, or to the general good, they become blessings; I acknowledge the sufficiency of the answer. But the same answer may with equal truth and force be made to his observations concerning sin. The Doctor grants, that the wickedness of the vicious shall be overruled to the glory of God and the advancement of the happiness of the righteous; *ibid*, p. 49. Though wickedness is in itself no blessing and no matter of thankfulness; yet when God overrules it to good, greater good than could have been effected in any other way; in this connection it is in the same sense a blessing, and matter of thankfulness, as calamity and misery are.

(12) On the plan of moral necessity, God tempts mankind to sin.——If the meaning of this be, that God establishes a connection between motives and volitions, and a previous certainty of those volitions; and in the course of his providence brings into the view of men motives which actually influence them to sin; I grant, that God does in this sense tempt mankind to sin; as he did our first parents, Judas, &c. Nor is there any ground, on which this can be denied, unless it be allowed, that this previous certainty is established by some other cause than the Deity, or that it exists without cause, or that volitions  
 O 2 are



are not previously certain, but happen by chance. To hold that the previous certainty of all volitions is established by some other cause than God, is to run into the Manichean scheme of two Gods, and at the same time to hold, that the second God is an involuntary agent and is the cause of all the volitions of the voluntary God, as well as of all creatures. If we say, this previous certainty of all volitions is uncaused, we may as well say, that every thing else is uncaused. If we say, that volitions are not previously certain, but happen by mere chance, we may as well say, that every thing else happens by chance.

But if by *tempting* be meant soliciting or enticing to sin, as the devil tempts men, we deny that this is implied in our doctrine.

Dr. West makes some remarks, Part II, p. 75, &c. on Jam. i. 13—16, which appear to be remarkable.—1. He tells us, that “a man is tempted, when he consents to the gratification of his own lust; *i. e.* when he commits sin.” Indeed! Is no man tempted, but he who actually commits sin in consequence of the temptation? The apostle Paul declares, Acts xx. 19, that he “served the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and *temptations*, which beset him by the lying in wait of the Jews.” And were all these temptations successful with the apostle? The very text implies the contrary. Gal. iv. 14. “And my temptation, which was in my flesh, ye despised not nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” Jam. i. 2. “Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations.” V. 12. “Blessed is the man, that endureth temptation: For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life.”

Or if Dr. West shall allow, that a man is or may be tempted without falling into sin, this will spoil his argument. His words immediately following those last quoted from him, are, “This proves, that when it is said, neither tempteth he any man, the sense is, God causeth no man to sin.” But if a man may be  
tempted



tempted without committing sin, then God may tempt a man, without causing him to sin.

2. He observes from *Leigh*, that the Greek verb *πειραζω*, used in the passage in James now under consideration, signifies to *make trial*, *i. e.* to try a person. But because James says of God, *neither tempteth he any man*, will Dr. West adventure to say, that God never *tries* any man? and particularly that he did not try Abraham?

3. Because this text declares, that God does not tempt, *i. e.* according to the Doctor's explanation, try any man, he infers that God "does not cause them to sin." This consequence follows not from the principle premised. Whether God do or do not, try men, he may so dispose things that sin will be the certain consequence; and this may be done not to try any man.

4. He says, that "a voluntary consent to indulge or gratify lust, is sin." Yet in the next sentence he says, "the apostle makes every sin to be the effect of a consent to gratify some particular lust:" *i. e.* every sin is the effect of sin.

5. The whole force of this text, to prove, that God does not dispose things so, that sin is the certain consequence, if it prove any thing to this effect, lies in these words, "Neither tempteth he any man." The Doctor says, "these must mean, Neither causeth he any man to sin;" *ibid*, p. 75.—But if "the Deity infallibly and perfectly regulate, govern and set bounds to the actions of all rational creatures, and overrule all those actions to accomplish his purposes," if he *make* them perform his purposes infallibly; as Dr. West says; then every thing which they in fact do, and every sin which they commit, was God's purpose and he *makes* them perform it. Is he then in no sense the cause of their sin? Does he not at least so dispose things, that sin is the certain consequence?

Dr. West abundantly asserts those things which necessarily imply both absolute decrees and such dis-



posal of God, that sin certainly and infallibly follows. "The creature," says he, "in every moment of its existence, is subject to the divine *control*; consequently *no act can take place*, but what the Deity foresaw and *determined* from all eternity to *overrule* to his own glory and the general good. If the Deity foresaw, that a creature ——— would do that which could not be overruled to the divine glory and the general good ——— he would *restrain* him from doing that;" Part II, p. 22. "He who has made all things ——— does *regulate* and *govern* all things, and *sets bounds to the actions of all rational creatures*.——The Deity, by his permissive decree, *superintends* and *governs all the actions* of his creatures to accomplish *his own purposes, in as strong a sense, as though he brought them to pass by his positive efficiency*;" *ibid*, p. 46. "We believe, that the Deity *governs* and *overrules* the actions of these beings" [rational creatures] "to bring about his own purposes and designs *as infallibly*, ——— as though they were *mere passive* beings;" *ibid*, p. 47.

Now if these things be so; no act of the creature can take place, but what God determined from all eternity, to overrule to his own glory. If God *restrain* the creature from the contrary; if he *overrule* all those actions to accomplish his purposes, in as strong a sense, as though he brought them to pass by his positive efficiency, and as infallibly as though they were mere passive beings; then certainly he does dispose things so, that all those actions do infallibly take place. To be subject to the *control* of our Creator in every moment of our existence, so that no act can take place in us, but what God from eternity *determined*; to be *regulated* and *governed* by God in *all things*; if he set bounds to *all* our actions; and if he *govern* and *overrule* all our actions in as strong a sense as if he brought them to pass by his *positive efficiency*, and as *infallibly* as though they were mere *passive beings*; surely all this implies, that God does so dispose of e-  
vents,



vents, that sin certainly follows. And on this plan, where is self-determination? Where is liberty to either side? liberty to act or not act? All the actions of rational creatures are limited, bounded and restrained to certain definite objects and purposes, which God from eternity had in view. They are therefore shut up to act one way only, and cannot act otherwise. They can act in such a manner only, as God from all eternity saw would accomplish his glorious purposes, *i. e.* his glorious *decrees*. Therefore all the actions of creatures are decreed from eternity to be precisely what they are, and all creatures are as infallibly restrained from acting contrary to the decrees of God, as if he brought their actions to pass by his positive efficiency, and as though they were mere passive beings.

If it should be said, that though God bounds and restrains his creatures from acting in a manner which is opposite to his purposes and decrees; yet he does not necessitate them to act at all, but leaves them at liberty to act or not act:—On this I observe,

1. As I have already said, whenever any thing is proposed to any intelligent being, as the object of his choice, it is, as Mr. Locke has long since thought, absolutely impossible for that being not to act. He may indeed either choose or refuse the object. But to refuse it is to act, equally as to choose it. In either case the being acts and cannot avoid acting, unless he be sunk into a state of perfect unfeeling stupidity.

2. If it were possible for a creature to act or not act; still according to Dr. West he could do neither the one nor the other, unless it were subservient to the glorious purposes of God. For if God will infallibly restrain creatures from acting in all instances, in which their acting is not subservient to his purposes; will he not restrain them from *not acting*, *i. e.* prevent their sinking into unfeeling stupidity, and excite them to action, in all instances in which not acting would not in like manner be subservient to his



purposes? If not, let a reason be given; a reason why God will not prevent creatures from counteracting his purposes by *not acting*, as well as by *acting*. Surely it will not be pretended, that to excite by rational motives and considerations, a creature to action, is more inconsistent with liberty, than infallibly to restrain, whether by motives or without motives, the same creature from action.

3. I appeal to the reader, whether the Doctor have not in the passages above quoted, given up the whole question both with respect to liberty as opposed to infallible moral necessity or certainty of moral action, and with respect to absolute decrees. If all men be limited and bounded by God, to act in all cases according to his purposes; if they be shut up to this way of acting, and cannot voluntarily refuse to act in this way, as that would be to act contrary to God's purpose; if they cannot absolutely cease from all action when an object is proposed to their choice, but must either choose or refuse, and that according to God's purpose; if, as Doctor West expressly declares to be according to his sentiments, "Every thing is as firmly fixed in the  
"divine mind, by his permissive decree, and shall be  
"as infallibly accomplished, as though he was the im-  
"mediate author or efficient cause of all the actions  
"of creatures;" *ibid*, p. 49. Let the candid reader judge, whether the Doctor do not grant both absolute necessity and absolute decrees.

He as we have seen in his Part II, p. 22, allows, that God permits and overrules sin to his own glory and the general good; but thinks this a demonstrative proof of self-determination. Let us consider what he says on this subject.—*Ibid*, p. 34; "If the  
"doctrine of necessity be true, and we are not self-  
"determined, then it will follow, that we are constant-  
"ly determined by the positive efficiency of the Deity."  
If it be true, as the Doctor holds, that God *regulates*  
"and governs all things, and sets bounds to the actions  
"of all rational creatures, to bring about infallibly  
"his



“his own purposes;” if he “govern free agents as perfectly and make them perform his purposes as infallibly, as if they had no agency at all;” I leave the reader to judge, whether we, in all our actions, be not, mediately or immediately, determined by the positive efficiency of the Deity. “If God make them perform his purposes infallibly,” it seems he must by his positive efficiency determine them to the performance; for what is it to make men perform a purpose, but to put forth positive exertions to this end? This is also by positive efficiency to abolish all liberty of self-determination.—If these things be denied, and it be affirmed, that still the man is at liberty to act in that particular manner, which is subservient to the divine purpose, or not to act at all, and thus there is room for self-determination; I answer,

1. It is not allowed, that a man on a proposal to act, can possibly *not act at all*; and this ought not to be taken for granted.

2. Then God does not infallibly make men comply with his purpose, but leaves them to comply or not; which is directly contrary to Dr. West himself, in the quotations made above.

3. If the Deity by his positive efficiency prevent his creature from every action, but that which is agreeable to his purpose, he will prevent him by his positive efficiency from refusing to comply with that purpose, and this is by positive efficiency to determine him to comply with that purpose. And the Doctor grants, that all the actions of rational creatures are agreeable to God’s purposes. Therefore all rational creatures in all their actions are determined by the positive efficiency of God. And all those which Dr. Samuel West mentions as absurd consequences of the sentiments of Dr. Stephen West, may be retorted on the former, thus; Since God infallibly *makes* and determines all men to perform his purposes, in all their actions, “sin is as much the work of God, as any thing that he has made. But that the Deity  
“should



“ should have an infinite aversion and an immutable  
 “ hatred to his works, is inconceivable. It is some-  
 “ times said, that the tendency of sin is to dethrone  
 “ the Almighty, to kill and utterly to destroy his ex-  
 “ istence. But is the Deity constantly working to  
 “ destroy himself? This will make the Deity a strange  
 “ contradiction to himself, and will constitute such a be-  
 “ ing, as cannot exist in the universe. If the Deity  
 “ forms wicked volitions in the human mind, and  
 “ then infinitely hates and abhors those very works of  
 “ his, he must be infinitely miserable and wretched.  
 “ God is said to rejoice in his own works——If then  
 “ sin is God’s work he rejoices in it——God is the  
 “ greatest lover of sin in the universe.” Whatever  
 absurdities these be, it concerns Dr. Samuel West,  
 as much as any man, to remove them. As appears,  
 it is presumed, by what has been said already.

Besides; most or all these objections lie with equal  
 force against the divine efficiency of pain, misery or  
 death. The Doctor will not deny, that these are in-  
 flicted by God. Therefore misery and death “ are as  
 “ much the works of God, as any that he has made.” Yet  
 “ he does not willingly afflict and grieve the children  
 “ of men.” And “ he has no pleasure in the death  
 “ of” even “ the wicked.” Therefore “ God has an in-  
 “ finite aversion and an irreconcilable hatred to his own  
 “ works:” And if this be inconceivable to Dr. West  
 he will not deny it to be fact; and therefore that a thing  
 is inconceivable to him, is no proof, that it is not  
 true. And that the Deity should hate misery and  
 death and yet cause them, would equally as in the  
 case stated by Dr. West concerning the introduction  
 of sin, “ make the Deity a strange contradiction to  
 “ himself, and would constitute such a being as can-  
 “ not exist in the universe.” “ If the Deity forms”  
 misery and death, “ and then infinitely hates and ab-  
 “ hors these very works of his hands, he must be in-  
 “ finitely miserable and wretched. God is said to re-  
 “ joice in his own works. If then” misery and death  
 “ be



“ be his works, he rejoices in them, and God is the  
 “ greatest lover” of all the misery and death “ in the  
 “ universe.” Whenever Dr. West will answer these  
 observations concerning the divine efficiency of mis-  
 ery and death, he will furnish himself with an answer to  
 his own similar observations concerning the divine  
 agency in the introduction of moral evil. If he  
 shall say, that God does indeed hate misery and death  
 in themselves considered, and inflicts them, because  
 they are necessary to greater good, and to the ac-  
 complishment of his own most benevolent purposes ;  
 the same may be said concerning moral evil.

The Doctor quotes the following passage from Dr.  
 Hopkins ; “ If God be the origin or cause of moral evil  
 “ this is so far from imputing moral evil to him, or  
 “ supposing, that there is any thing of moral evil in  
 “ him, that it necessarily supposes the contrary :” On  
 which he remarks, “ Consequently, if God be the or-  
 “ igin and cause of holiness, this by the same kind of  
 “ reasoning, is so far from imputing holiness to him, or  
 “ supposing, that there is any thing of that nature in  
 “ him, that it necessarily supposes the contrary ; that  
 “ is to say, that the Deity has no moral character at  
 “ all.” In the above quotation, Dr. Hopkins evi-  
 dently means, If God be the cause of *all* moral evil, or  
 of the first which existed in the universe. This the  
 word *origin* implies ; he evidently uses it to mean *origi-  
 nal* cause. Now whatever is in God, is uncaused.  
 Therefore if there be moral evil in him, neither he  
 nor any other being is the cause of that ; of course  
 whatever moral evil he causes, must all be out of him-  
 self ; and if he cause all moral evil, it must all be out  
 of himself and none of it in him. So that Dr. Hop-  
 kins’s proposition on this head is manifestly true.  
 Suppose the Doctor had said, If God be the cause of  
 all matter, this so far from supposing matter in him, ne-  
 cessarily supposes the contrary ; no doubt Dr. West  
 himself would have acknowledged the truth of the  
 proposition ; And let a reason be given why the form-  
 er



er proposition, in the sense now given of it, is not as true as the latter. As to the consequence which Dr. West draws from Dr. Hopkins's proposition, "that if God be the cause of holiness [of *all* holiness] this is so far from supposing holiness in God, that it necessarily supposes the contrary;" this is so far from an absurdity, as Dr. West imagines, that it is a manifest truth. Holiness in God is no more caused or created, than the divine essence. If then there be no other holiness, than created holiness, there is and can be none in God.

On a passage in which Dr. Hopkins asserts, that moral evil and holiness are equally the consequence of the divine disposal, but whether by the same mode of operation he could not tell; Dr. West remarks, "This makes it extremely unhappy for us; for we seem to have no way to know a true revelation from a false one, both equally coming from the Deity;" p. 46, Part II. But how this consequence follows from the assertion of Dr. Hopkins, Dr. West does not illustrate. God may so dispose things, that sin infallibly follows, and yet not be the author of a false revelation: And as the Doctor merely asserts, without attempting to prove what he asserts, he has no right to expect, that his assertion should be received as truth. If the Doctor take it for granted, that if God, in the way which I have explained, introduce sin, he is himself as real a sinner, as he would be, if he were to give a false revelation, he takes for granted the very thing in question, which is to be fairly proved, not pitifully begged.

In the same page, he says, "According to Dr. Hopkins will it not follow, that many who are led by the Spirit of God, are the children of the devil?" This implies, that whenever God, by means of motives or in any other way, so disposes of things, that sin infallibly follows, the man who is the subject of that sin, is in that sin led by the Spirit of God. The principle on which this argument is built, is, that



that whenever God so disposes things, that an action is the certain consequence, in that action the man is led by the Spirit of God. But Dr. West will not avow and abide by this principle : For he grants, that men always act upon some motive and never without motive. Nor will he deny, that the constitution, that men should always act upon motive and never without, is established by God. Yea, the Doctor expressly asserts, that “ God overrules *all the actions of his creatures* to accomplish his own purposes in as strong a sense as though he brought them to pass by his *positive efficiency*.” Yet he will not pretend, that in all those actions they are led by the Spirit of God.

The Doctor proceeds ; “ The Deity is called the Father of lights, from whom proceeds every good and perfect gift. But according to these principles, may he not, with as much propriety, be called the Father of darkness, from whom proceeds all malignity and wickedness ?” Since the Doctor holds, that “ The Deity governs free agents as perfectly and *makes* them perform his purpose as infallibly, as if they had no agency at all ;” the question which the Doctor here proposes concerning the principles of Dr. Hopkins may with equal propriety be proposed on his own principles. And notwithstanding any agency which God exercises toward the production of moral evil, he may with the same truth and propriety be called *the Father of lights*, as he is called *the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort*, although all the pains and miseries, which his creatures suffer, whether in this world or the future, are inflicted by him.

The Doctor seems to attempt to screen himself from those, which he supposes to be absurd consequences of Dr. Hopkins's scheme, by representing, that he holds, that God barely *permits sin*. But to *superintend, govern and overrule* the actions of rational creatures “ as infallibly, as if they were mere passive beings ;” Part II, p. 47 ; and “ in as strong a sense, as though he brought them to pass by his positive ef-  
“ *iciency* ;”



“ficiency;” *ibid*, p. 46. “So to fix them, that they shall as infallibly be accomplished, as though he was the immediate author or efficient cause of them,” *ibid*, p. 49. “And to govern free agents as perfectly and to make them perform his purposes as infallibly, as though they had no agency at all;” *ibid*, p. 67; is more than barely to permit free agents to act of themselves. Barely to permit them to act of themselves, by which the Doctor explains himself to mean, “ordaining things contingently, *i. e.* avoidably, and with a possibility of not coming to pass,” *ibid*, p. 47; is not to govern them at all, but to leave them to govern themselves; it is not to overrule their actions, but to leave them to overrule their own actions; it is not to make them perform his purposes, but to leave them loose to perform or to omit those purposes. And much less is it to govern and overrule their actions as infallibly as if they were mere passive beings, and in as strong a sense as though he brought them to pass by his positive efficiency; to fix those actions as infallibly as though he was the immediate author of them; or to govern them as perfectly and to make them perform his purposes as infallibly, as though they had no agency at all.

Dr. West constantly insists, that “the Deity has communicated to man a self-moving or self-active principle.” But what kind of a self-moving principle is that, which is always and in all its actions infallibly and perfectly regulated, governed and overruled by an extrinsic cause? and which is made by God as infallibly to perform his purposes, as if it were no self-moving principle at all? Such a self-moving principle as this, is so like a principle that never moves itself, but is always moved by an extrinsic cause, that I request Dr. West to point out the difference.

The Doctor grants, that “there is a sense in which God hardens the hearts of men,” and that this is by his “taking from *them* what he had granted them, as “a just punishment of their neglect and abuse of the advantages which they enjoyed;” Part II, p. 52. He grants



grants therefore, that God may consistently with his holiness harden the heart, and cause sin in men, in some cases; viz. when they deserve it as a just punishment of their sin. But the only reason, which renders it consistent with the divine perfections, to inflict this or any other just punishment, is, that the glory of God and the general good of his kingdom require it. Now no one pretends, that God ever in any sense causes sin to take place, unless its existence be subservient to the glory of God and the good of his kingdom. And if this reason will in one case justify his so disposing of things, that sin is the infallible consequence, why not in another? Until a reason is given to the contrary, we may presume, that whenever the glory of God and the general good of the creation require it, God may and does so dispose things, that sin is the infallible consequence.

“A man’s becoming a vessel to honour or dishonour, is in consequence of his own conduct and behaviour.” Part II, p. 54. If by becoming a vessel to dishonour the Doctor mean, *being punished*, no doubt it is in consequence of a man’s own misconduct, and to assert this is to assert nothing very great or pertinent to the question concerning the cause of sin. But if he mean by it committing sin; this is not, nor can be always in consequence of the sinner’s own misconduct; because this like the self-determining power, implies the absurdity of an infinite series of actions, in consequence of each other; and that a man is doomed to commit sin in the first instance, in consequence of a prior sin committed by him.

“God does not harden the hearts of men, by any positive efficiency in forming or infusing any wickedness into their heart, but only taking from them those things, which were designed to restrain them from the committing of sin, and by permitting them to walk in their own wicked ways;” *ibid*, p. 55. Of all men Dr. West so long as he holds, that God as perfectly and infallibly regulates, governs and over-  
rules



rules all the actions of free agents, and makes them conform to his purposes, as perfectly as if they had no agency at all, should be the last to object to the idea of God's positive efficiency of sin; as has been already illustrated. But aside from this, if God by taking from men what is necessary to restrain them from sin, lay them under an infallible certainty or absolute moral necessity of sinning; what advantage is gained by this mode of representing the matter? Is it at all more favourable either to the liberty of men, or to the holiness of God? To be sure this representation implies all that necessity, for which President Edwards pleads in the case. It is so to dispose things, that sin is the infallible consequence. Or if this taking away of restraints be attended with no certain consequence of sin, how does God by it harden the sinner? It seems, that after all he is left in a state of uncertainty, *i. e.* Dr. West's perfect liberty, whether he will sin or not. Where then is hardness of heart? Does it consist in perfect liberty? It is further to be observed, that if sin, for instance, an act of malice, envy or inordinate self-love, should come into existence, without any positive causation, whether by motive or in some other way; why may not any other positive thing, either substance or mode, and even the whole material universe, come into existence in the same way?

Dr. West remarks on Isai. lxiii. 17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* "Now it is certain from the texts that have been already examined, that nothing more is intended, than that God leaves men to err, and to harden their own hearts;" *ibid*, p. 51. This positive assertion led me to review the Doctor's remarks on those texts, and I am very willing the candid should judge concerning the Doctor's exhibition of certainty, that nothing more is intended, by God's hardening the hearts of men, than that God leaves them to harden their own hearts. He says, p. 52, in what sense God hardens the heart, our Saviour will



will inform us, Mat. xiii. 14, 15. "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." In answer to this it may be said with equal force, In what sense God hardens the heart, we are informed in Job. xii. 40. "He hath blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes," &c. Whatever right the Doctor has to suppose, and without a reason to deliver the *opinion* as truth, that Job. xii. 40, is to be explained by Mat. xiii. 15; any other person has the same right to *suppose* and to deliver the opinion as truth, that Mat. xiii. 15, is to be explained by Job. xii. 40.

The Doctor constantly insists, that "God never hardens any man or withdraws his spirit and grace," *ibid*, p. 52, but in consequence of his abuse of them. If this were ever so true, it would not settle the question concerning the origin of moral evil. For the question is not what is the cause or source of sin in some particular cases, as in hardening the heart, in consequence of a former sin or sins; but what is the cause of all sin, and particularly of the *first* sin, whether in man or in the universe. Now to answer this question by saying, that when a man has "abused God's spirit and grace," God delivers him up to sin, is as absurd as to answer the question concerning the origin of the human race, by saying, that after Adam had lived a while, he begat a son.

Although the Doctor thinks it certain from the texts, which he had examined, that Isai. lxiii. 17, "inclines nothing more than that God leaves men to err and to harden their own hearts;" he does not choose to rest the matter on that foundation; but observes, that "Hebrew verbs in Hiphil often signify only permission." If this were ever so true, it would decide nothing concerning Isai. lxiii. 17. If verbs in Hiphil do often signify only permission, this implies, that they often do not signify that only. Then the question would be, what does it signify in this text?

P

Neither



Neither Dr. West nor any other Hebraist, will pretend, that a verb in Hiphil *naturally* signifies permission only. If therefore any verb in that conjugation do signify that only, it must be for some other reason, than merely because it is in that conjugation. If there be any such reason in this case, the Doctor has not informed us of it. Nor can I conceive of any, unless it be the supposed absurdity of understanding the text as it is translated. But the Doctor must on reflection be sensible of the impropriety of taking that supposed absurdity for granted. Let him prove it, and he will oblige us to believe him.

On 1 Sam. xvi. 14, "The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from God troubled him," the Doctor remarks, "*i. e.* he was left of God to his own gloomy and frightful imaginations;" *ibid*, p. 57: But who was the efficient cause of his own gloomy imaginations? Surely they did not happen out of nothing, like the atheist's world. Nor will the Doctor pretend, that Saul designedly produced them in his own mind. So that he gives no account of the cause of those imaginations, and no explanation of the text.

"If then the Deity creates sin, in the sense in which he creates darkness, it will follow, that as darkness is the consequence of God's withdrawing light, so the consequence of God's withdrawing his spirit and grace from any person, is sin; which will fall in exactly with our sense of God's hardening the heart." If sin in no instance take place, but in consequence of God's withdrawing his spirit and grace from a person; then God's spirit and grace are sometimes withdrawn from a person, antecedently to his sinning: And in those cases they are not withdrawn in righteous judgment, and as a just punishment of sin; because the person, by the supposition, has been guilty of no antecedent sin. Yet the Doctor every where considers the withdrawment of God's spirit and grace as a just punishment of the sin of those from whom it is withdrawn;



drawn ; as a just punishment of the neglect and abuse of the advantages, which they enjoyed, &c. &c. And on this ground only he attempts to justify the withdrawment. If on the other hand, sin in any instance, do take place when there has been no withdrawment of the divine spirit and grace ; then the Doctor has here given no account of the existence of sin in that instance ; and such an instance there was, when sin first came into existence ; it took place without a withdrawment of grace, in the way of righteous judgment.

It may here be added, that though darknes, a mere non-entity, will take place in consequence of the withdrawment of light ; yet malice, envy and inordinate self-love, positive acts of the mind, will no more take place in consequence of mere withdrawment of influence, than benevolence or supreme love to God, or the whole material creation, would come into existence in consequence of a mere withdrawment of the influence of God.

“ We see in what sense God is said to move, stir  
 “ up or incline men to evil actions ; viz. by permit-  
 “ ting Satan to tempt men to evil, or by permitting  
 “ things to take place, which *occasion* men to become  
 “ perverse.” Ibid, p. 64. If the Doctor by “ *permitting*  
 “ things to take place,” mean that God so disposes  
 things that certain definite events will infallibly follow ; this is all for which I plead, and which President Edwards held on this head. And surely the Doctor does not mean, that things are of their own accord and by their own native power, independently of the divine agency, endeavouring to take place, and will effect the object of their endeavour, if they be permitted by the Deity ; as a high mettled steed, when permitted by his rider, leaps into a race. This would favour too much of atheism, to be holden by a Christian divine. As to the human mind’s making one volition by another or without another, I have nothing more to say ; nor do I wish to say any more



concerning it, till an answer is given to what has been already said.

This text, "I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge," Isai. x. 6; Dr. West says, "implies no more than that the Deity meant to punish the Jews, by *letting loose* the King of Assyria upon them;" *ibid*, p. 67. Yet in the same page he says, that the king of Assyria "was as much under the control of the Deity, as the axe and the saw are under the control of the workman." Yet this control over that king implies no more, it seems, than that God let him loose on the Jews. And is no more implied in the control which the workman has over the axe and the saw, than that he *lets them loose* on the timber? I appeal to the reader, whether if the king of Assyria "was as much under the control of the Deity, as the axe and the saw are under the control of the workman;" a positive and efficacious influence, and not a *bare permission*, be not implied in such control.

On Rev. xvii. 17, "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled;" the Doctor remarks, "These ten kings are to agree — in giving their kingdom to the beast, that by his protection and assistance, they may be able — entirely to destroy the whore, by whom they have been long oppressed." *Ibid*, p. 68. Thus the Doctor supposes, that the end, for which these ten kings give their power to the beast, is that by his assistance they may destroy the great whore. But this is a mere *supposition*, unsupported by any thing in the text or context; nor does the Doctor give any reason toward its support. Besides, what advantage is there in this supposition? Is the beast mentioned a friend to virtue and religion? And did those kings do their duty in giving their power into his hands? If they did not; of course they did wrong; and



and then the difficulty of God's putting it into their hearts to do this wrong still remains.

On quoting Isai. v. 4; "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked, that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" the Doctor adds, "according to the scheme I am opposing, all that the Deity has done to his vineyard, was to make it bring forth wild grapes. How could he then appeal to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to judge between him and his vineyard?" Ibid, p. 71, &c. Now this and all the rest that the Doctor adds in his remarks on that text, lies equally against the scheme of a permissive decree "perfectly and infallibly bounding," "restraining," "marking out" and "fixing bounds to the actions of men, beyond which they cannot pass." For according to this scheme of the Doctor, "all that the Deity has done to his vineyard was" by restraining them from all other actions, by bounding them to those very actions which they have performed, and by fixing such bounds as they could not pass, "to make them bring forth wild grapes. How then could he appeal to the men of Judah and Jerusalem to judge, between him and his vineyard? Will it be said, that the means used with them were such, that if they had been rightly improved they would have enabled them to have brought forth good grapes? The answer — is very easy; these means could have no effect but such as the Deity designed them to have;" because "the Deity fixed their bounds, beyond which they could not pass," "and they must produce either good or bad grapes, according to the" bounds fixed by the Deity. — And so on through the same and following page. But I need not republish Dr. West's book by way of retortion.

The Doctor in his 4th essay, Part II, (and in his Postscript) on 1 Kings xxii. 23, "Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth



“ of all these thy prophets ;” says, “ The word trans-  
 “ lated *put* ought to have been translated, The Lord  
 “ hath *permitted* or *suffered* a lying spirit, &c. for the  
 “ verb here translated *put*, frequently signifies to *per-*  
 “ *mit* or *suffer*. For the truth of this I appeal to  
 “ every good Hebrician. Thus in Ezek. xx. 25,  
 “ instead of, I *gave* them statutes that were not good,  
 “ it should be, I *suffered* them to have statutes that  
 “ were not good ;” p. 66. It is always a sufficient  
 answer to a mere confident assertion, as confidently to  
 deny it. Therefore my answer is, “ The verb here  
 “ translated *put*,” which is נתן does not “ frequently sig-  
 nify *permit* or *suffer* ;” and in Ezek. xx. 25, “ Instead  
 “ of, I *gave* them statutes that were not good, it should”  
 not “ be, I *suffered* them to have statutes that were not  
 “ good.” Dr. West for the confirmation of his criti-  
 cism “ appeals to every good Hebrician.” Whom he  
 would acknowledge as a good Hebrician, is very un-  
 certain. Therefore, instead of appealing to so uncer-  
 tain a judge, I call on the Doctor himself, or any oth-  
 er Hebrician good or bad, to point out the instances,  
 whether frequent or unfrequent, in which נתן signi-  
 fies merely to *permit* or *suffer*. Beside this, sufficient  
 reasons must be given to convince the candid and ju-  
 dicious, that it is used in this sense, in the text now  
 under consideration, and reasons which do not beg  
 the main point, that God can do nothing toward the  
 existence of sin, but barely to permit it. When these  
 things shall have been done, we shall have better  
 ground, on which to believe the Doctor’s criticism,  
 than his mere round assertion.

CONCLUSION.



## C O N C L U S I O N.

I HAVE now finished my remarks on Dr. West's *Essays on Liberty and Necessity*. If he shall think proper to write again on those subjects and to reply to these remarks, I request him to attend to those points only, which are material and affect the merits of the cause. If I have exposed myself by ever so many inadvertencies, which do not affect the merits of the cause, to take up his own time and that of his readers, to exhibit them, seems not worth while. In disputes of this kind such inadvertencies are frequent. Also such disputes are apt to degenerate into misrepresentations, personal reflections and logomachy. How far I have fallen into any of these, it is not proper for me to say. However, I may say, that I have endeavoured to avoid them. I hope the Doctor will be successful in the same endeavour.

If he shall write again, I request him to inform us more clearly, what he means by self-determination. If he mean no more than he hitherto professes to mean, "that we ourselves determine;" he will inform us, wherein on that head he differs from President Edwards or any other man; and whether it be his opinion, that we determine our own volitions in any other sense, than we determine all our perceptions and feelings.— If he shall be of the opinion, that we efficiently cause our own volitions; I request him to inform us, how we do or can do this otherwise than by antecedent volitions. If he shall grant, that this is the way, in which we cause them; he will please to remove the absurdities supposed to attend that supposition; and also decide whether or not we cause them without any restraint by previous certainty, *i. e.* whether we cause them by mere chance, and at hap-hazard.

If he shall still be of the opinion, that volition is no effect; he will please to inform us how to reconcile



cile that with the idea, that it proceeds from an intrinsic cause and is originated by him who is the subject of it. If volition have a cause, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, it is of course an effect.—He will also be so kind as to inform us, whether every human volition existed from eternity, or whether it came into existence without cause.

If he still maintain, that with respect to praise and blame, there is no difference between natural and moral necessity; I wish him to inform us, whether Judas were as blameless in betraying his Lord, because it was previously certain and certainly foretold, that he would do it, as he was for being attached to the surface of the earth, and not ascending to heaven as Elijah did.

I hope the Doctor will explain himself concerning antecedent and consequent necessity. If he mean, that before the existence of any human action, there was no certainty, that it would exist; he will please to reconcile this both with divine foreknowledge, and with the prophecies of scripture. If by antecedent necessity, he mean any thing else than antecedent certainty, he will please to show how it is to the purpose, or how it opposes what we mean by antecedent necessity.

I request him to show the consistency between these two propositions, that motive is necessary to every volition; and that men do not always act on the strongest motive. He will of course show, what the motive is which persuades a man to pass by the strongest motive, and to act on a weaker.

It is to be wished, that the Doctor would explain his favourite power *to act or not act*. If he shall own, that he means a power to choose or refuse merely, it is presumed, that his candour will lead him to own also, that he means nothing on this head different from President Edwards, unless by *power* he mean previous *uncertainty*, and by a man's power to choose or refuse, he mean, that it is in itself and in the divine view *uncertain*,



*certain*, whether he will choofe or refuse : And if he mean this, I wish him to avow it.

I hope he will not spend time in discussing questions, which are merely verbal, such as whether motive be the *cause* or the *occasion* of volition. All that President Edwards means by *cause* in this case, is *stated occasion* or *antecedent*.

Perhaps the Doctor will find his book to be no less useful, if he shall confine himself more to *argument*, and indulge himself less in *history*. Narratives, however true and accurate, of his own opinion without his reasons, and of his ability or inability whether to do or to conceive, are very uninteresting to those who think for themselves, and do not depend on the Doctor as an authority. If he had hitherto spared all such narratives, his books had been considerably shorter and no less demonstrative.

I hope the Doctor will be very explicit in communicating his idea of liberty. I presume he will join with me in the opinion, that the whole controversy turns on this. If the liberty necessary to moral action be an exemption from all extrinsic influence, we hold that the certain consequence is that either we cause one volition by another ; or that our volitions come into existence without cause and by mere chance. Therefore the Doctor will please to show, that neither of these consequences follows ; or will avow whichever he believes does follow.

He supposes self-determination is free action. Now I wish him to inform us, whether self-determination, that is limited, bounded, governed and overruled, to a conformity to the divine purpose, as he asserts all the actions of rational creatures to be, is free action. If it be, I request him to inform us, why an action decreed to be conformed to the same divine purpose, is not also free.

I rejoice, that this important subject has been taken up by so able an advocate as Dr. West. From his high character we have a right to expect, that if  
the



the cause which he has undertaken, be capable of support, it will be supported by the Doctor. I wish the other side of the question had an advocate able to do it justice. However, since I have embarked in the cause, I shall, so long as important matter is brought forward, do as well as I can, till I shall either be convinced that the cause is a bad one, or find myself unable to reply: And I doubt not, that my failure will draw forth to the support of the truth, some more able advocate, who now through modesty or some other cause, does not appear for its defence.

I think it is but fair, that Dr. West, and all others who write against moral necessity, should take the explanations, which we give of moral and natural necessity and inability, and all other important terms in this disquisition: And so far as they oppose any doctrine which we hold, they ought to oppose it in the sense in which we hold it, and not in a sense which they may find it convenient to impute to us, because they can more easily confute it. Such a management of any question as the last mentioned, will never bring it to an issue, and besides is exceedingly disingenuous, and gives reason to suspect the goodness of the cause, in favour of which it is employed.

As this question concerning liberty and necessity affects the most important subjects of morality and religion; it is to be wished, that the discussion of it may finally conduce to the more clear understanding and the more sincere and cheerful practice of virtue and piety, and to the glory of our God and Redeemer.



## ERRATA.

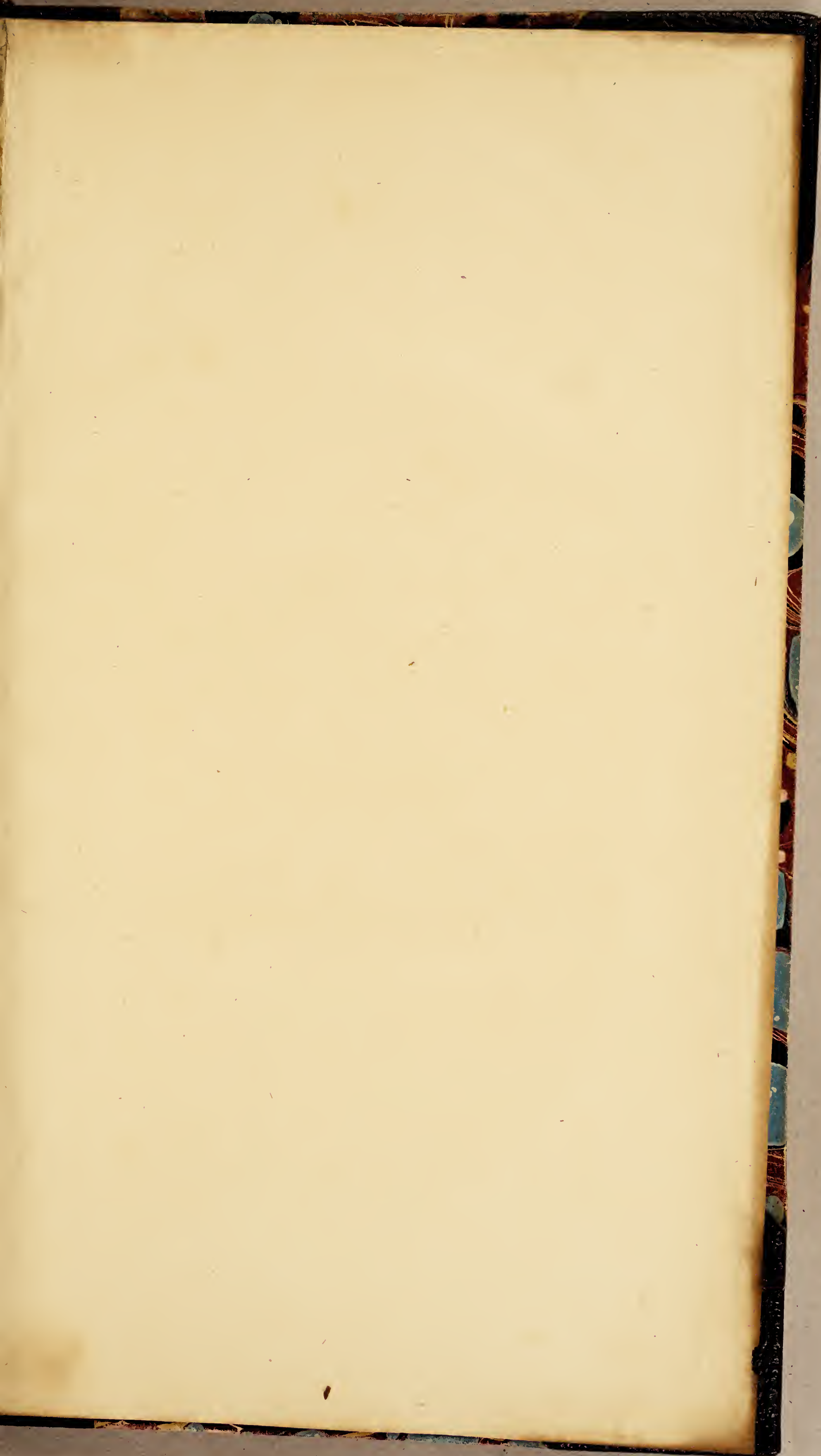
THE Reader is requested to correct the following Errors, most of which escaped the Author, in preparing the Manuscript for the Press.

- Page 8, line 21, for *the*, read *some*.  
37, 17, for *freedom*, read *power*.  
50, 11, read, it does *it*.  
65, 7, read, why it is *as it is*.  
84, 20, for *then*, read *than*.  
105, 14, for *Johnson*, read *Jackson*.  
140, 17, read, which *do not* happen  
143, 31, read, judge *the world*.  
164, 11, read, *without* a cause.  
180, 28, for *this*, read *the*.  
215, 23, for *thought*, read *taught*.

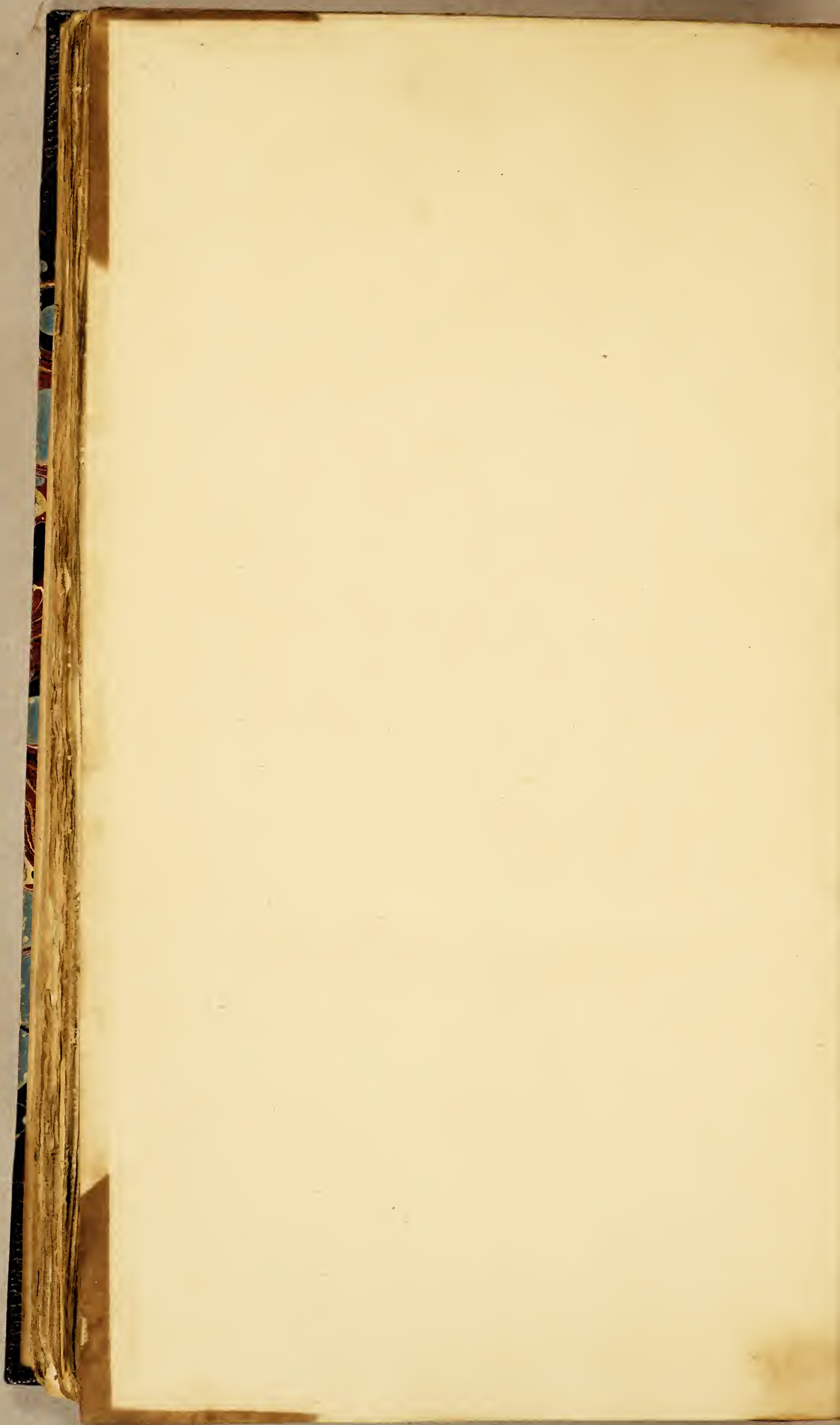


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